

HISTORY OF THE 13TH/18TH ROYAL HUSSARS (QUEEN MARY'S OWN) 1922-1947

316445

R. Holdsworth. Cav. of the line R.A.C.

16/5 Queens Royal Lancers 1928 - 1930

9th Royal Lancers. Sialkot 1930 - 31

13/18th Royal Hussars Q.M.O. 1931 - 1947.
Rualtun France Belgium Austria

Queens Bays. 1947 - 1953.

Stations

Italy

Hedworth, Edinburgh, Sialkot

Risalfur N.W.F.P. India

France, Germany, Austria, Belgium -
Italy.

Ranks.

Q.M. Sgt. W.O. II

Emergency Reserve R.F.M.E. 1954 - 58

W.O. I

Given to Charlie Ratte
by widow of "Dickie" Holdsworth.

JAN. 1985.

Given to Charlie Preston
by Martin, son of C.R. after C.R.'s death.
(on 6.11.85.)

Passed on to Gill Masters. after Charlie's
death 05.01.95.

D. DAY LANDINGS.

1ST. TRP. B. SQUADRON. G. E. Masters



HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY
Colonel-in-Chief, 13th/18th Royal Hussars
From the portrait by A. T. Nowell in possession of the Officers' Mess

HISTORY OF THE
13TH/18TH ROYAL HUSSARS
(QUEEN MARY'S OWN)
1922-1947



VIRET IN AETERNUM.
PRO REGE, PRO LEGE, PRO PATRIA CONAMUR

BY
MAJOR-GENERAL CHARLES H. MILLER
C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., p.s.c.
Late 13th/18th Royal Hussars
(Q.M.O.)

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS



CHISMAN, BRADSHAW, LTD.
8 CLARGES STREET · PICCADILLY · LONDON · W1

Dedicated
By Gracious Permission
to
Her Majesty QUEEN MARY
Colonel-in-Chief of the
13th/18th Royal Hussars

In Memory of
the Officers, N.C.O.'s
and Men of the Regiment
who were killed or died
in the Service
of King and Country,
1922-1947

Printed by
OLIVER BURRIDGE & CO. LTD.
London
1949

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Foreword by Field-Marshal Viscount Alexander	XIII
Introduction by the Author	XV
CHAPTER I The Link with the Past	I
<i>An outline of the histories of the 13th Hussars and 18th Hussars.</i>	
CHAPTER II Between the Wars, 1922-1938	5
<i>The Amalgamation - Aldershot - Edinburgh - Shorncliffe - Egypt - India - return to Shorncliffe.</i>	
CHAPTER III With the British Expeditionary Force in the Second World War	27
<i>Training as a Mechanized Divisional Cavalry Regiment - Mobilization - Outbreak of the Second World War - The 'Phoney' War - Fighting in Belgium and France - Dunkirk</i>	
CHAPTER IV In England, 1940-1943	60
<i>The Threat of Invasion - the Battle of Britain - training as an Armoured Regiment.</i>	
CHAPTER V Training as a D.D. Regiment, 1943-44	70
<i>First Lessons in the D.D. Tank - Wickham Market - Gosport - Fort George - Final Preparations - Marshalling and Embarkation.</i>	
CHAPTER VI The Assault on the Normandy Bridgehead	91
<i>The Channel Crossing - The Assault - Across the Orne - Fighting for Caen - Back across the Orne - Mont Pincon - Falaise Gap and Breakout.</i>	
CHAPTER VII Advance to the German/Dutch Frontier	125
<i>Through France and across the Seine - Into Belgium and Brussels - Into Holland - Arnhem.</i>	

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER VIII The Winter Campaign and Last Round	141
<i>The 'Island' - Pause for Administrative Reasons</i>	
<i>- Geilenkirchen-Waldefeucht - Clearing the west</i>	
<i>bank of the Rhine - Goch - Alpon escarpment -</i>	
<i>Across the Rhine - the Last Lap - Bremen - Uncon-</i>	
<i>ditional Surrender - V.E. Day.</i>	
CHAPTER IX With the British Army of the Rhine,	
1945-1947	165
<i>Life in Occupied Germany - Hanover - V. J. Day</i>	
<i>- Vienenberg - Immendorf - Wolfenbuttel - Return</i>	
<i>to England.</i>	
Index	217

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FRONTISPIECE

HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY

Colonel-in-Chief, 13th/18th Royal Hussars

	FACING PAGE
PLATE 1 The Drum Banners of the Regiment	4
PLATE 2 Lieutenant-General Lord BADEN-POWELL, O.M., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.C.L., LL.D.	8
PLATE 3 Her Majesty QUEEN MARY with Officers and Warrant Officers of the Regiment, SHORNCLIFFE, 15th July, 1939	30
PLATE 4 A Light Tank Mk.VIB of the Regiment in France, October, 1939	34
PLATE 5 DUNKIRK Beaches, 31st May, 1940	56
PLATE 6 Her Majesty QUEEN MARY inspects Her Regiment near MARLBOROUGH, 25th April, 1942	66
PLATE 7 The D.D. Tank	72

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
PLATE 8 The Assault, NORMANDY, 6th June, 1944. The 13th/18th Royal Hussars launch their amphibious tanks.	96
PLATE 9 Disabled D.D. Tanks of the Regiment after the Assault, 6th June, 1944	100
PLATE 10 The 'PEGASUS' Bridge over the RIVER ORNE	106
PLATE 11 Tanks of the Regiment near ST. HONORINE, 23rd June, 1944	108
PLATE 12 Men of the Regiment on the beach near LA BRECHE, June, 1944	110
PLATE 13 Destruction after FALAISE, August, 1944	126
PLATE 14 Crossing the RIVER SEINE, 28th August, 1944	128
PLATE 15 A Sherman Tank of the Regiment by the RIVER WAAL (OR RHINE)	142
PLATE 16 'A' Squadron in action during the Attack on GEILENKIRCHEN, 18th November, 1944	146
PLATE 17 General Sir BERNARD MONTGOMERY presenting the Military Medal to Serjeant R. HEPPEL, 13th/18th Royal Hussars, 30th November, 1944 <i>(later killed in action at GOCH)</i>	147
PLATE 18 The 'Winter' Campaign on the German/ Dutch border, January, 1945	150
PLATE 19 Formation Signs worn by all ranks of the Regiment, 1939-1947	170
PLATE 20 'WE WILL REMEMBER THEM'	208

LIST OF MAPS

		FACING PAGE
MAP NO. 1	Advance and Retreat in BELGIUM 10th-23rd May, 1940	37
MAP NO. 2	Retreat to DUNKIRK 23rd-30th May, 1940	47
MAP NO. 3	The Assault 6th June, 1944	93
MAP NO. 4	East of the RIVER ORNE June and July, 1944	105
MAP NO. 5	The Battle for CAEN 8th-9th July, 1944	111
MAP NO. 6	The Battle for MONT PINCON. 30th July-12th August, 1944	117
MAP NO. 7	The Breakout and Advance 17th-25th August, 1944	125
MAP NO. 8	ARNHEM and the 'ISLAND' 21st September-9th November, 1944	137
MAP NO. 9	GEILENKIRCHEN and WALDEFEUCHT 12th November, 1944-January, 1945	145
MAP NO. 10	Clearing the West Bank of the RHINE 8th February-23rd March, 1945	153
MAP NO. 11	The Last Round in GERMANY 25th March-8th May, 1945	161
MAP NO. 12	The 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Q.M.O.) in North-West Europe 6th June, 1944-22nd October, 1947	164

APPENDICES

	PAGE
APPENDIX I	Nominal Roll of Colonels - Officers Commanding - Quartermasters - Adju- tants - Regimental-Serjt.-Majors and Bandmasters of the Regiment, 1922- 1947 177
APPENDIX II	Diagram showing the 13th/18th Royal Hussars in the Order of Battle of the B.E.F. on the 10th of May, 1940, and subsequent operations in France and Belgium 179
APPENDIX III	Diagram showing the 13th/18th Royal Hussars in the Order of Battle of 21 Army Group on the 6th of June, 1944 180
APPENDIX IV A	Summary of Operations by D.D. Tanks in the D-day Assault on Nor- mandy, the 6th of June, 1944 . . . 181
APPENDIX IV B	D.D. Squadrons' operation on the 6th of June, 1944. Reports made by certain officers at HERMANVILLE on the 9th of June, 1944 182
APPENDIX V	13th/18th Royal Hussars - Outline Organization, Mechanized Divisional Cavalry Regiment, 1939-40 . . . 186
APPENDIX VI	13th/18th Royal Hussars - Outline Organization, Armoured Regiment with D.D. Tanks, 1944 187
APPENDIX VII	Honours and Awards, 1939-1945 . 188
APPENDIX VIII	The Roll of Honour 208
APPENDIX IX	The 13th/18th Royal Hussars Aid Society 214
APPENDIX X	The 13th/18th Royal Hussars Old Comrades Association 216

‘The man is the first weapon of battle: let us then study the soldier; for it is he who brings reality to it. Only study of the past can give us a sense of reality, and show us how the soldier will fight in the future.’

From Ardant du Picq in *‘The Good Soldier’*
by FIELD-MARSHAL EARL WAVELL

FOREWORD

BY FIELD-MARSHAL THE VISCOUNT ALEXANDER OF TUNIS
K.G., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., C.S.I., D.S.O., M.C.

I AM very glad to have the privilege of writing these few words of introduction to the history of a great fighting Regiment.

My first acquaintance with the 13th/18th Royal Hussars was just before the outbreak of the Second World War. They were stationed at Risalpur and I was at Nowshera on the North West Frontier of India.

When I took the 1st Division to France in September 1939, the 13th/18th formed part of my command as the Divisional Mechanized Cavalry Regiment, and it was in this rôle that they played a prominent and important part in the delaying battles in Belgium and Northern France, which ended in the successful evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from the beaches of Dunkirk.

To my regret this distinguished Regiment never served again under my command during the remaining years of the War, although I was fortunate to keep a link with them in the person of Major-General Miller. I had known this officer in India when he commanded the Regiment and again in England just before the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. He came to my 18th Army Group in Tunisia as Chief Administrative Officer and served in this capacity throughout the Sicilian operations and later in Italy when my command was known as the Allied Armies in Italy.

As the writer of this book, he tells us of the life of the Regiment from the early days, and brings us to the time when they were one of the chosen units selected for the Normandy invasion in 1944.

After D-day they took an active part in the battles of

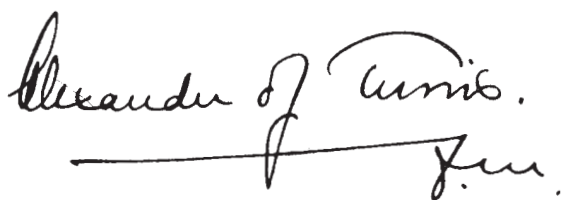
the West until the Germans laid down their arms in unconditional surrender.

This fine old Cavalry Regiment, which carries on its colours such famous battle honours as WATERLOO, BALACLAVA and MONS, will now be able to add fresh lustre to its proud name by the victories won in France at CAEN, FALAISE and the SEINE, and the later triumphs gained in the Low Countries.

It is a wonderful story which will appeal to all soldiers and especially to those who belong to the Regiment. It is also a fitting tribute to those members of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars who gave their lives and in so doing added fresh glory to the unit they served so faithfully.

There are many others who should feel better men for reading of the acts of heroism and gallantry with which the pages of this book abound and which are so well and graphically described by the author.

In wishing this history every success, I do so in affectionate remembrance of the Regiment whose gallant conduct as my rear guard in 1940 saved my Division to fight another day.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Alexander of Tunis." followed by a horizontal line and the initials "J.M." at the end.

Government House, Ottawa.

March 31st, 1948.

INTRODUCTION

'The Regiment—that sacred and abiding thing—was the parent of all our victories from the deathless defence of Calais in 1940 to the Great battle on the Dutch/German border that broke the back of the Reichswehr in 1945.'

ARTHUR BRYANT, 1946

I UNDERTOOK to write the history of the Thirteenth-Eighteenth Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) with great diffidence because I cannot claim to be a writer—far less a historian. I feel that the history of any regular regiment of the British Army—let alone that of the best (and everyone rightly thinks his own the best)—deserves nothing less than the pen of an author of the highest talents.

I would like this history not only to give future generations an accurate and interesting account of the services of the Regiment in war and peace, but also an understanding of the qualities and virtues which enabled their forbears to do their duty and win undying fame and honour for their Regiment in the past.

Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery, like other great commanders before him, has strongly emphasised the paramount importance in war of the human element.

It is true to say that, had it not been for the fighting qualities of the regular regiments of the British Army, our Empire would not have survived the first terrific impacts of the two World Wars which have taken place in the lifetime of the present generation. Starved in peace of almost everything they needed, these regiments had no material advantages in numbers or equipment to save them from annihilation at MONS, DUNKIRK and in the early battles of the Western Desert. But they did possess those human qualities which enabled them to refuse to admit defeat and to do their duty without counting the cost.

They will not in the future, any more than in the past, be responsible for the nature and quantity of whatever weapons and equipment the atomic age may bring; but they will continue to have a very definite responsibility for the moral qualities of the human beings who will form the rank and file of the future army. The leadership which not only commands but truly leads; the discipline which puts duty first without thought or hesitation; the teamwork so essential in game and combat; and the comradeship which will never let down unit or friend; these are the qualities which in the past have stood the test, and which, in the future, may have to stand an even greater strain.

We must not allow the wonderful new inventions of our day to blind our eyes to the human problems which must remain supreme for all time.

In times of peace the British regular soldier has, for years, provided security for people of different creeds and languages in many lands. Some of these people will see him no more. His departure is inevitable with the growth of the national aspirations which have been the aim of British rule. But the weak and helpless will miss his friendly and impartial hand, and his unfailing cheerfulness and humour. Only the agitator and gangster will be pleased to see him gone.

Life in the regular regiment will alter in the future. Military technique and equipment cannot remain the same and foreign tours of service will be spent in other lands, with new opportunities for training, sport, and recreation.

Times must change, but officers and men of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars, as guardians of their inherited traditions, must remain conscious of their responsibilities, and never fail to develop the great qualities which have made the British regular regiment supreme in history.

*

*

*

This history begins with a brief outline of the histories of the 13th Hussars and 18th Hussars before they amalgamated in 1922, and ends when the 13th/18th Royal

INTRODUCTION

Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) returned to ALDERSHOT in 1947—almost exactly twenty-five years later.

It recounts the activities of the Regiment during the years between the wars, when too many people thought that the First World War would be the last of all wars, that the League of Nations would settle the differences between countries by peaceful means, and that weapons of war and fighting men were out of date. It goes on with the story of the Regiment during the period of disillusionment and feverish activity, when Hitler's intention of world domination became apparent. This period saw the great revolution in military technique, when the British Army became mechanized, and the cavalryman finally exchanged his horse for the tank and the armoured car, and became an expert in gunnery and wireless.

It tells how the Regiment crossed over to France with the British Expeditionary Force in 1939, and took part in the disaster in Belgium and France which ended at DUNKIRK; of the long tiresome period of training in England, followed by the unique and glorious rôle of the Regiment in the assault on Normandy in 1944; and of the final victorious advance through Western Europe and across the Rhine, until the German armies were brought to unconditional surrender at midnight on the 8th/9th of May, 1945. It concludes with a brief account of the Regiment in Occupied Germany before their return to England on the 23rd of October, 1947.

I am afraid that this history may fall far short of the high ambitions which have been my aim. But the many shortcomings are not the fault of all those who have so kindly helped me in the task. Many officers and other ranks of the Regiment have written first-rate accounts of their experiences and of the battles in which they took part. I have taken the liberty of reproducing some of these accounts. I am particularly grateful to Lieutenant-Colonel D. A. Stirling, Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Moulton-Barrett, Lieutenant-Colonel V. A. B. Dunkerly, D.S.O., Lieutenant-

Colonel D. B. Wormald, D.S.O., M.C., Major R. M. S. Neave, M.C., Major J. A. S. Neave, M.B.E., Captain J. H. Aldam, M.C., and Captain H. A. Burder, all of whom have rendered most valuable assistance in checking and correcting the accounts of the Regiment's activities both in training and in the campaigns in which they took part.

I am indebted to the Regimental Journals published between 1924 and 1939 for much information about the Regiment's services, sport and games in peace time.

I am very grateful to the Librarians of the War Office, the Royal United Service Institution, and the Staff College, Camberley for their help; to the Imperial War Museum, which provided many of the photographs and kindly gave permission to reproduce the picture of the Dunkirk Beaches by Charles Cundall, R.A.; and to the Officers of the Historical Section of the Cabinet who kindly gave me much help by allowing me to check details and facts.

I am deeply indebted to Miss V. Farrington who did the typing and Mr. Freeman who drew the maps.

I am most grateful to Major-General R. J. Collins, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., who very kindly read my first drafts and made many valuable criticisms and suggestions. Mr. Arthur Bryant, M.A., LL.D., was good enough to read the final proofs of this history. I consider it a great privilege that this famous historian should have spared the time to give to this work and I most sincerely appreciate his very kind and friendly act.

Finally I must thank Mr. M. B. Bradshaw of the Art Exhibitions Bureau and Mr. F. Oliver BurrIDGE of Oliver BurrIDGE & Co. Ltd., for the production of this history. They gave expert advice on every aspect of the work and brought unbounded enthusiasm into it. Without them the history could not have been produced with equal quality and economy in the present difficult times. I am most sincerely grateful to them for their unfailing help and guidance.

C. H. M.

Carrington House, Hertford Street, London, W.1. 1947-1948.

Chapter 1

THE LINK WITH THE PAST, 1715-1921

AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORIES OF THE 13TH HUSSARS AND 18TH HUSSARS

THE two Regiments which formed the 13th/18th Hussars in 1922 each brought with them their own traditions and past records of service in peace and war. Their principal battle honours are, today, inscribed on the Regimental Drum Banners and are an everlasting reminder to all ranks of a glorious past.

The key to the future lies in the past. By studying the qualities and virtues which won undying fame and honour in its history, the Regiment will learn how to win fresh fame and honour in the future. Regimental tradition is not mere sentiment or rigid doctrine to be blindly followed, but an inspiration on which the inevitable changes of the future must be based.

The history of the 13th Hussars goes back to the year 1715 when this Regiment was first raised by Brigadier Richard Munden as Mundens Dragoons. A few years later it became known as the 13th Dragoons, and in 1777 as the 13th Light Dragoons, a designation which it retained until 1862 when it was converted into a Hussar Regiment and called the 13th Hussars.

The services of the Regiment both in peace and war, at home and abroad, from 1715 to the end of the First World War, have been fully recounted in the works of C. R. B. Barrett¹ and Sir Mortimer Durand.² Up to the outbreak of the Second World War, the 13th Hussars had fought in ten campaigns of one kind or another, and seen service

¹ *The History of the XIII Hussars 1715-1910* in two Volumes by C. R. B. Barrett.

² *The 13th Hussars in the Great War 1910-1919* by Sir Mortimer Durand.

not only on the Continent of Europe, but also in the West Indies, Canada, India, Afghanistan, the Crimea, South Africa and Mesopotamia.

The 18th Hussars was the younger regiment by forty-four years. Founded in Ireland in 1759 by Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant Charles, Sixth Earl of Drogheda, it was then named the 19th Light Dragoons or commonly known as Drogheda's Light Horse. Colonel H. Malet in his Historical Memoirs of the Regiment records how the Earl of Drogheda planted trees in his park at Moore Abbey, Kildare, to represent the two original squadrons in line as they stood on their first parade.

In 1766 the Regiment became the 18th Light Dragoons and sent detachments to fight in the West Indies in 1794-98.

In 1805 it was redesignated the 18th Hussars and sailed for Portugal in 1808 to take part in the campaign which ended in the retreat to CORUNNA—a campaign which bears some analogy to that in which a future generation of the Regiment was to take part in Belgium and France in 1940.

From 1813-1814 the 18th Hussars fought in the Peninsular War and in 1815 was at the Battle of Waterloo.

The Regiment was disbanded in 1821 during one of those periods of Army retrenchment so common in our history, but was re-formed in 1858 and subsequently saw service in India and the South African War. Throughout the First World War it served in France and Flanders and after a short time at COLOGNE in the Army of Occupation moved to India where it remained until ordered home in 1922 to amalgamate with the 13th Hussars. The full story can be found in the Memoirs written by Colonel Harold Malet¹ and Major-General Charles Burnett.²

¹ *The Historical Memoirs of the Eighteenth Prince of Wales Own Hussars 1759-1906* by Colonel Harold Malet.

² *The 18th Hussars in South Africa 1899-1902* by Major Charles Burnett.

Memoirs of the 18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) 1906-1922 by Brigadier-General Charles Burnett, C.B., C.M.G.

It is interesting to recall a few of the principal campaigns and battles which saw both Regiments in early days. They share certain battle honours won in the Peninsular War. Both Regiments were present at VITTORIA on the 21st of June, 1813, when the 13th Light Dragoons captured the Royal Carriages and baggage train of King Joseph Bonaparte. Barrett tells how a Serjeant of the Regiment left in charge obediently, though innocently, handed over the booty to an Infantry Officer without receipt. In 1840, however, amends were made when the Regiment was given back King Joseph's magnificent mahogany dining table¹ which is today in the Officers' Mess.

Both Regiments were at the ORTHES on 27th February, 1814, and met again a month later near TOULOUSE when,

¹INSCRIPTION FROM THE PLAQUE ON THE MESS HISTORICAL TABLE

VIRET IN ÆTERNUM

Pro Rege, pro Lege, pro Patria conamur

Captured by the 'Ragged Brigade' (the 13th and 14th Light Dragoons) from King Joseph's baggage after the Battle of Vittoria, 21st June, 1813, the table remained in the possession of the 14th until that Regiment went to India in 1840, when they presented it to the 13th.

From 1840 it has been in constant use by the Officers of the Regiment except during the periods of active service.

The top is of Spanish (Cuban) mahogany of rare beauty and dates according to Mr. Edwards from about 1800, according to Mr. Langhorne from as early as 1750. About 1870, the undercarriage was removed and replaced by a mid-Victorian frame with heavy round legs, made of inferior mahogany, and a screw mechanism, while at the same time the top was stained a deep red, varnished and french polished, and it is believed, the existing moulding added.

In 1937, while the Regiment was in India, Colonel S. V. Kennedy and the Officers, alarmed at the condition of the top owing to the widening of the snakes and the warping of the leaves, decided to send the table home to Brigadier-General A. Symons (late 13th Hussars), and ask him to superintend its renovation. The necessary work was carried out during that year.

In 1939, on the return of the Regiment from India, Colonel C. Miller and the Officers decided to remove the undercarriage and to replace it by the present stand which was copied from the dining table of the late 18th Century at Hardwicke Hall.

All of the work was carried out by Mr. Langhorne under the direction of Mr. Ralph Edwards, curator of the Woodwork Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

it is related, – ‘The 18th now came on the scene with Sir Stapleton Cotton and the 13th was then ordered to recross the canal and put up in any convenient villages which they found.’

The two Regiments fought at WATERLOO on 18th June, 1815. The 13th was in the Brigade commanded by Major-General Grant whilst the 18th was in the Hussar Brigade under Major-General Sir Hussey Vivian. A month before the battle both Regiments took part in the big cavalry parade under the Earl of Uxbridge which was held at SCHENDELBEKE near the RIVER DENDRE when they were inspected by the Duke of Wellington and Marshal Blucher. It must here be recorded that the Duke of Wellington held a commission in the 18th Light Dragoons for a short period in 1791. On their way to Waterloo the cavalry regiments marched through NINOVE, GRAMMONT and the FORET DE SOIGNES where the 13th/18th Royal Hussars were to find themselves in 1940 during the retreat from

MAP I the RIVER DYLE.

The Drum Banners display battle honours awarded both for the ‘Siege’ and for the ‘Relief’ of LADYSMITH in the South African War. The 18th endured the months of siege whilst the 13th formed part of the relieving force which arrived on the 28th of February, 1900, and marched through the streets of the town a few days later. No doubt the soldiers of the two Regiments met afterwards to exchange stories of their adventures in the campaign.

After South Africa their ways again parted until both Regiments found themselves in France and Flanders in the First World War. The 18th embarked from England with the ‘Old Contemptibles’ in 1914 and was at MONS and on the AISNE, but the 13th came from India late in 1914 with the first Indian Contingent, and moved to Mesopotamia in 1916 where it fought until the end of the war.

Thus are the 13th/18th Hussars linked with the past and are the proud inheritors of a double history.

Chapter 2

BETWEEN THE WARS, 1922-1938

THE AMALGAMATION - ALDERSHOT - EDINBURGH

SHORNCLIFFE - EGYPT - INDIA - RETURN TO SHORNCLIFFE

AFTER the First World War it was decided to reduce the number of Line cavalry regiments. The reduction was effected by amalgamating sixteen regiments in pairs and reconstituting them as eight regiments.

The identity of the original regiments was preserved by maintaining within each reconstituted unit two squadrons of the senior original regiment and one squadron of the junior, and by giving to the new regiment a title combining the designation of the two regiments from which it was formed.

It was on the 9th of November, 1922, that the Squadron of the 18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) under Major W. Holdsworth disembarked from India and marched into Warburg Barracks, ALDERSHOT, to join with the 13th Hussars under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel E. F. Twist.

Thus was formed the 13th/18th Hussars.

His Majesty The King was graciously pleased to appoint Her Majesty Queen Mary to be Colonel-in-Chief of the 13th/18th Hussars on November the 20th, 1922, and, in an Army Order published on the 31st of December, 1935, to approve that the designation of the 13th/18th Hussars be changed to 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own).

The fusion of the two Regiments took time to complete in every detail, but a start was quickly made. It was decided that the 13th/18th Hussars should retain the full dress uniform of the 13th Hussars with the buff facings and white plume and the Regiment consequently con-

tinued to be known by the old nickname of 'The Lily-whites.'

A new regimental badge was designed and approved, but this was later changed to that now worn and issued in India in 1937. New drum banners were made by the Royal School of Needlework and inscribed with the principal battle honours of both Regiments. These were presented by Her Majesty Queen Mary and past officers and handed to the Regiment at RISALPUR in February, 1937, by Lieutenant-General Lord Baden-Powell,¹ the Colonel.

The Officers and Serjeants respectively pooled their mess plate and in due course the Regimental Associations and Aid Societies² of the two Regiments became fully integrated.

When the two Regiments joined, the 18th Royal Hussars were already allied to the 1st Manitoba Mounted Rifles (originally the 18th Manitoba Mounted Rifles). Later in 1924 His Majesty The King was graciously pleased to approve that the 17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars be allied to the 13th Hussars; and again in 1928 that the 18th Light Horse Regiment, Australian Military Forces (later to become the 8th Light Horse (Machine Gun) Regiment (Adelaide Lancers)) be allied to the 18th Royal Hussars. Thus was established with the 13th/18th Hussars an imperial bond of sympathy with the Dominions Overseas which continues to the present day.

*

*

*

At ALDERSHOT the Regiment, together with the 10th Royal Hussars and the Royals, comprised the 1st Cavalry Brigade under Colonel-Commandant A. E. W. Harman,³ who had commanded the 18th Hussars in France, 1915-16.

The Regiment was organized in three sabre squadrons

¹ Lieutenant-General Lord Baden-Powell, O.M., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.C.L., LL.D.

² See Appendices IX and X.

³ Later Major-General Sir Wentworth Harman, K.C.B., D.S.O.

of four troops each, with a headquarter wing containing the machine gun troop; but in 1927 the number of sabre squadrons was reduced to two, with a third squadron comprising the machine guns. At the same time a start was made with the mechanization of first line transport.

The three years spent in ALDERSHOT were uneventful. The Great War of 1914-18 had been won to end wars. People had been sickened by the terrible loss in life and limb and wanted peace. They had little interest in military affairs. There was furthermore a very real and urgent need for Great Britain to recoup war wastage and the Geddes axe soon fell heavily upon all three Services. This was reflected in drastic cuts in military expenditure and serious curtailment in equipment and facilities for training.

In 1922 the world overseas was still far from peaceful, and there were heavy demands upon the British soldier for the maintenance of law and order in many lands. There was an unending call for trained men for overseas drafts and the training of recruits became the chief preoccupation of the Regiment. This left few men available to turn out for exercises in the field and it was necessary to form a composite squadron in order to muster sufficient strength to carry out squadron training.

In these circumstances it was not surprising that the thoughts of all ranks were turned more towards the pursuit of sport and recreation than to military studies and training. But the Higher Command did everything possible to organise study courses for officers and to carry out such higher training as available resources would permit. Major L. S. Lloyd¹ passed into the Staff College, Camberley, in 1925 and Captain C. H. Miller followed him in 1927.

A high standard of administration and discipline was set and as in all good regiments, regimental duties and the welfare of the men came first.

¹ Later Brigadier L. S. Lloyd, M.C., who was taken prisoner at MECHILI in the Western Desert in 1942 but gallantly escaped and found his way across the desert to TOBRUK.

In a foreword to the Regimental Journal which was started at this time, Lord Baden-Powell, Colonel of the Regiment, wrote:—

‘ . . . I believe that one of the most notable features in both the 13th and 18th has, for generations past, been the genuine friendship and goodwill that existed—and still exists—between officers and men. This has grown up not only through playing games together in peace time but in daring together and dying together in playing the greater game of war. . . . ’

Few men have known and loved the British soldier better than the great cavalryman who wrote these words, and the Regiment did wisely to take them to heart. It is a well-known fact that the serjeants’ mess is the backbone which holds a regiment together, and the 13th/18th were fortunate at this time in having a strong team ably led by Regimental-Serjeant-Major B. Rabjohn, who had been promoted in January of that year.

There were certainly no thoughts of war in 1922, and the Regiment entered whole-heartedly into the games and sports which ALDERSHOT offered. Much was being done at the time to improve the sports grounds and other facilities for recreation in the Army, and there were excellent opportunities for football, hockey, cricket, boxing and mounted sports of all sorts in which Regimental teams took a keen and not inconspicuous part.

The Regimental Riding School ran a very popular musical ride and Cossack display, which attained an exceptionally high standard. Serjeant Mennell won the ‘All Arms’ at the Royal Tournament at Olympia in 1924, and in the same year Captain J. L. M. Barrett won the coveted Connaught Cup for jumping at the International Horse Show. The officers also occupied themselves with hunting, point-to-points and polo, taking all the opportunities for leave which they could get.

The Army Education Corps was formed after the war, and instructions were issued making education in the

Army compulsory. In order to gain promotion to Staff Serjeant or above, a first-class certificate of education became necessary. It is perhaps true to say that many regimental officers, at this time, failed to appreciate the value of these new regulations, thinking that the time spent in the classroom over books and sums could be better employed in other forms of military training. But there can be no doubt of the wisdom of this measure. Future warfare was to demand an ever higher standard of intelligence on the part of the individual soldier to enable him to compete with mechanization and to use efficiently the highly technical weapons and equipment which were to become essential for the modern army. There can be no one today who does not appreciate the need for an ever-increasing standard of intelligence and understanding on the part of the soldier in every rank.

The Regiment took part in His Majesty The King's review of troops held on Laffan's Plain in the summer of 1923, and again in 1924 and 1925.

On the 24th of May, 1923, Their Majesties The King and Queen honoured the Regiment by a visit to their Barracks, and inspected each squadron, the institutes and married families. Major W. Holdsworth acted as Field Officer in attendance on Her Majesty Queen Mary—the Colonel-in-Chief—during the Royal visits to ALDERSHOT in 1923 and 1924.

The Aldershot Military Tattoo was started shortly after the war on a comparatively small scale with the object of raising funds for military charities and keeping the Army before the public eye. It soon grew in scale and scope until it became one of the greatest spectacular events of the English summer season, attracting tens of thousands of spectators from all over the country and abroad. Whether it fulfilled the required object of popularising the Army is a doubtful point, although it certainly produced much-needed funds. But rehearsals took regiments away from training for weeks on end beforehand, and the Tattoo

was, in consequence, most unpopular with the keener commanding officers.

On the 1st of July, 1925, Lieutenant-Colonel E. F. Twist completed his period in command and was succeeded by Lieutenant-Colonel W. Holdsworth. Lieutenant-Colonel Twist joined the 13th Hussars in 1898 and saw active service with the Regiment in South Africa, France and Mesopotamia. Except for three years when he was adjutant of the Warwickshire Yeomanry, he had spent the whole of his service in the Army with the Regiment.

After three weeks of strenuous manoeuvres in the Salisbury Plain area, the Regiment moved to EDINBURGH in October, 1925, where it was hospitably met by the 1st Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers who were at first to be their neighbours at Redford Barracks.

On leaving ALDERSHOT the Commanding Officer received the following personal letter from General Sir Philip Chetwode,¹ G.O.C.-in-C. Aldershot Command:—

‘A line to wish you and your fine Regiment good luck and God-speed on leaving Aldershot. The Regiment has left a fine name behind it, and is in every way fit for war and we are all very sorry you are going. Please wish them all good luck from me and tell them I consider the Regiment fully up to the best cavalry standards.’

—high praise from one of the most distinguished cavalry commanders of the First World War, who was afterwards to become Commander-in-Chief in India and a Field-Marshal.

*

*

*

The principal event of interest, which occurred during the two years which the Regiment spent in Scotland, was the General Strike which took place in June, 1926. ‘C’ Squadron, under Major J. W. Cobb, was at Maryhill Barracks, GLASGOW, whilst the remainder of the Regiment ‘stood to’ in barracks at EDINBURGH. Nothing developed,

¹ Later Field-Marshal Lord Chetwode, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., D.S.O.

however, to necessitate the troops being called out in aid of civil power, and, when the strike ended, the Regiment resumed its normal life.

There were plenty of opportunities for sport and games for both officers and men, but there was little scope for training other than for the recruit and individual.

Captain J. Hawker ran a pack of beagles which provided hard exercise for all ranks on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and officers had ample outlet for their energies in their spare time with hunting, shooting and fishing. The Regiment won the Command Inter-Unit Cricket Cup in 1926 and again in 1927, and in the latter year the Scottish Command Boxing Championship. This latter success was particularly well deserved as great keenness in boxing had been shown for some years by the large number of recruits and young soldiers who formed the greater part of the Regiment. Several officers and non-commissioned officers distinguished themselves again at Olympia and at the International Horse Show, and Captain D. A. Stirling was a member of the Army Jumping Team which visited the Continent in 1927.

On the 12th of July, 1926, Lieutenant-General Lord Baden-Powell celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the date on which he joined the 13th Hussars with a visit to the Regiment. After an inspection and march past, at which he took the salute as Colonel of the Regiment, the Commanding Officer presented him with a silver salver from all ranks to commemorate the occasion.

In 1927 the death occurred of Troop-Serjeant-Major Edwin Hughes, late 13th Hussars, at the age of 96. He was the last survivor of those who took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade at BALACLAVA on the 25th of October, 1854.

The very happy time which the Regiment spent at EDINBURGH came to an end in October, 1927, when it moved to Somerset Barracks, SHORNCLIFFE, to relieve the Royals. Before leaving it was inspected by General Sir

William Peyton, G.O.C.-in-C. Scottish Command, who expressed himself as pleased and proud to have had the Regiment under his command.

*

*

*

SHORNCLIFFE had little different in the way of soldiering to offer. Training areas were very restricted, and it was difficult to exercise the horses except on hard and slippery main roads. Recruit and individual training, musketry, education, courses and minor tactical exercises were the normal order of the day.

Nothing had arisen by 1927 to make anyone think of future war. Hitler had not yet come to the fore in Germany; Mussolini had set up a regime in Italy which, although of a revolutionary nature, seemed to indicate nothing but peaceful progress for that country; and the world appeared to be entering upon a period of uninterrupted peace and prosperity.

There were no important changes in organisation and equipment in so far as the Regiment was concerned, although army transport was in process of becoming entirely mechanized, and a number of trials and experiments were carried out at ALDERSHOT and on Salisbury Plain with tanks and new types of tracked vehicles.

It was about this time that the War Office issued a pamphlet, which became popularly known in military circles as 'The Purple Primer'. This document gave much food for thought to officers of the Staff College and higher formations as to future armoured warfare, but it was not followed by any drastic changes in the equipment of the Army for many years to come.

In the sphere of games the Regiment held its own and Lance/Serjeant E. Goff was Champion Man-at-Arms at Olympia in 1928.

The Regiment took part in brigade and divisional manœuvres during August and September of that year. These were held in Sussex and lasted for five weeks. The operations were characterized by many flags and dummies

representing non-existent men and weapons, but, at least, the Regiment learned for the first time to appreciate the advantages of a mechanized first line transport échelon, and the two Machine Gun Troops were carried in Morris 6-wheel trucks instead of on pack horses or limbered waggons.

On the 1st of July, 1929, Lieutenant-Colonel W. Holdsworth retired and Major J. N. Lumley¹ was promoted to take his place. At the same time Regimental-Serjeant-Major Rabjohn retired and was succeeded by Squadron-Serjeant-Major E. Loader. Lieutenant-Colonel Holdsworth joined the 18th Hussars in 1904, and, except for a brief period in 1910, had served continuously with his regiment and throughout the First World War. At the last inspection, the Inspector-General of Cavalry had written:—

‘Colonel Holdsworth may be assured of the satisfaction of handing over to his successor a regiment in as great a state of efficiency as anyone could wish.’

The Regiment was now due for a tour of service overseas, and on the 20th of September, 1929, embarked at SOUTHAMPTON in H.M.T. SOMERSETSHIRE for Egypt.

*

*

*

The anti-British agitations, which had been characteristic of Anglo-Egyptian relations in Egypt during the years after the war, had died down—outwardly at any rate—by 1929, and it was a peaceful and popular station for British troops.

The Regiment, with the 10th Royal Hussars, 12th Lancers and the 2nd Brigade Royal Horse Artillery formed the Cairo Cavalry Brigade under command of Brigadier R. G. H. Howard-Vyse.² The climate was good and healthy, once the troops had got over their initial attacks of ‘Gypsy tummy’ and learnt to carry out the careful instructions issued with regard to proper hygiene and

¹ Later Brigadier J. N. Lumley, C.B.E., M.C. — Colonel 13th/18th Royal Hussars.

² Later Major-General Sir Richard Howard-Vyse, K.C.M.G., D.S.O.

sanitation. There was unlimited scope for training and recreation, and, unlike soldiering in England, the ranks were kept up to strength without the unceasing demand for drafts.

At this time the 12th Lancers were re-organised into an Armoured Car Regiment; they, with the 11th Hussars, were the first British cavalry regiments to lose their horses and become mechanized. Egypt was eminently suitable for training with the new equipment, afforded excellent facilities for instruction in cross-country driving and maintenance under desert conditions, and gave the experience which was to bear fruit a hundredfold in the years to come.

In 1931 Lieutenant-General Sir John Burnett-Stuart became G.O.C.-in-C. in Egypt. Certainly one of the greatest trainers of the soldier which the British Army has ever produced, he probably also had a clearer insight as to the trend of mechanized and air warfare than any other soldier of his time. His arrival marked the beginning of a vigorous reformation in training. He reminded the Army in Egypt that future war would demand the very highest standard of intelligence and leadership on the part of junior officers and non-commissioned officers, and that it would entail great hardship for all ranks alike. Ever-growing air-power and the motor vehicle would change previous conceptions of time and space, and the deserts of the Middle East could no longer be looked upon as impassable obstacles to military forces.

Training, therefore, was to be directed with these ends in view, and he indicated many of the ways in which this could be done even without much of the necessary means in the way of modern equipment. Training was to concentrate on the development of junior leaders; manoeuvres and exercises were to be framed to impose realistic tests, and the cease-fire was no longer to be sounded when men and horses were tired, or when night, bad weather, or dust storms arose; officers were to be encouraged to visit

and get to know the surrounding deserts, and small mechanized columns were to be organized to carry out long distance reconnaissances to test equipment, develop initiative and gain experience in the desert.

Unfortunately the Regiment did not have many months left in Egypt under the command and guidance of the new Commander-in-Chief as they moved to India in October, 1931; but they learnt enough to infuse them with fresh ideas which were to be put into effect during the ensuing years in India.

The Regiment had worked and played hard during their two years in Egypt and the time had gone by quickly. All ranks had played football, hockey and cricket together with great keenness. Polo had been taken up with enthusiasm by nearly all officers and it looked as if a good young team would be trained to win tournaments in India before long. The Regiment won the Command Boxing Championship in 1930/31, beating the King's Regiment by one point after some particularly good fights, and Serjeant E. Goff again showed himself the Champion Man-at-Arms of Egypt in 1929 and 1930.

Lieutenant-Colonel Lumley had welded the Regiment into an efficient unit and a happy family by the time they embarked at SUEZ in H.M.T. SOMERSETSHIRE on the 6th of October, 1931, destined for SIALKOT.

*

*

*

The Regiment disembarked at KARACHI on the 15th of October, 1931, and, after the usual tedious train journey, reached SIALKOT on the 19th to join the Sialkot Cavalry Brigade under command of Brigadier C. R. Terrot.¹

India, like other countries, had emerged from the First World War with high hopes of political advancement in return for her war effort, and with the spirit of self-determination well developed in certain parts of the community.

¹ Succeeded by Brigadier T. A. A. Wilson, I.A., and later by Brigadier (later Major-General Sir) F. G. Watkin, C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

When the Regiment arrived in India in the autumn of 1931, the civil disobedience movement was definitely on the wane. But the terrorist movement continued to be a serious menace in Bengal. The Indian Round Table Conferences had begun, and the discussions appeared marked on both sides by a greater desire to understand each other's point of view than had previously been the case.

In so far as the Army was concerned, a definite programme of indianization of the Indian Army had been agreed, but could only proceed according to the dictates of efficiency and was likely to be a slow process.

Earlier in the year communal disturbances had broken out in KASHMIR, and the Regiment hardly had time to settle down in barracks before they were ordered to go to Jammu State, on the 6th of November, to deal with gangs of 'redshirts', who were causing trouble on the KASHMIR border. Activities, however, were confined to visiting native villages and to patrolling, and the Regiment was back again in SIALKOT by the 19th of the same month. The operation afforded some useful training, and helped all ranks to shake off the effects of the long journey from Egypt. Except for this incident the Regiment remained unaffected by the political problem in India during the whole period of its tour.

There was, however, almost continuous trouble on the North West Frontier. In 1933 there was an outbreak in the BAJAUR and MOHMAND countries, which necessitated the despatch of the Peshawar and Nowshera Brigades to those areas. Again, in February, 1935, there was a serious incident at LOE AGRA in the lower SWAT country, in which the Nowshera Brigade was involved under command of Brigadier The Hon. H. R. L. G. Alexander,¹ under whom the Regiment was to serve in the 1st Division in France and Belgium in 1939/40.

From 1936 to 1939 there was much fighting in

¹ Later Field-Marshal The Viscount Alexander of Tunis, K.G., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., C.S.I., D.S.O., M.C.

WAZIRISTAN, at times on a major scale, but, unfortunately, the Regiment was not called upon to take any part and remained throughout at SIALKOT and RISALPUR.

Officers and other ranks were given many opportunities of visiting the Frontier, both as sightseers and on tactical exercises without troops, and in March, 1936, brigade training was held along the borders of the UTMAN KHEL, MOHMAND and AFRIDI countries where the tribesmen were restless. The march was of great interest and gave most valuable experience on the Frontier, where so many actions had taken place in the past and were not unlikely to take place again.

India was still the best training ground for the soldier, especially in the north-west, where the hot weather was comparatively short and the climate for the remainder of the season could hardly be improved upon anywhere else in the world. The military cantonment breathed an atmosphere of soldiering, containing as it did nothing but soldiers and their families, and life in all its aspects was, consequently, dependent upon what the Regiment, as a family, cared to make it for themselves.

Many weeks each year were spent in camp, or bivouac, and on the line of march during brigade, regimental and squadron training, from the banks of the CHENAB to the borders of the North West Frontier.

The ranks of the Regiment were kept filled to establishment, and there were unlimited opportunities for the training of junior leaders in command and initiative. The hot weather was not allowed to put a stop to training in the field, and section leaders were sent out on long distance reconnaissances with their own mounted units for two or three days and nights on end; this gave them a feeling of real responsibility both in command and administration in the field. Great trouble was taken to find the right men for promotion, and severe tests were imposed on prospective non-commissioned officers to discover their capabilities as junior leaders.

First line transport had been mechanized in India, and many trials were carried out on manœuvres to relieve the weight on horse and man and thus increase the mobility of cavalry. Many long marches took place on both light and hard scales. When the Regiment first arrived, the principal weapons of the cavalry were the rifle and the Vickers machine gun; but later, at SIALKOT, the Vickers Berthier was added on the scale of one per troop, which greatly increased the Regiment's fire power. The anti-tank rifle had not yet made its appearance and flags and dummies to represent this and other weapons were all too conspicuous on field days and exercises. Musketry reached a high standard, which was maintained in regimental and army rifle meetings and on field firing. Serjeant W. Bayes gained credit for the Regiment, and distinction for himself, by winning the King's Medal at MEERUT in 1935 and being runner-up in 1936.

When the Regiment received orders to return to England in the autumn of 1938 to be re-organized as a mechanized divisional cavalry regiment, instructors were borrowed from the Royal Tank Regiment in PESHAWAR, and courses in driving and maintenance were begun. But limitations in the necessary training equipment did not allow more than a start to be made in the new rôle.

On the 1st of July, 1933, Lieutenant-Colonel J. N. Lumley was promoted to command the Meerut Cavalry Brigade and was succeeded by Major S. V. Kennedy. Brigadier Lumley's close association with the Regiment was to be renewed later, when he succeeded Colonel J. J. Richardson¹ as Colonel of the Regiment, an appointment which he was still holding at the time this history was written.

All games and sports, both mounted and dismounted, flourished. Cricket was played regularly throughout the hot weather, and boxing continued to be keenly pursued.

¹ Colonel J. J. Richardson, D.S.O., commanded the 13th Hussars from 1914-1920 throughout the First World War in France and Mesopotamia.

There were horse shows, and jousts in horsemanship and skill at arms against other cavalry regiments, which provided valuable training and keen competition. Weekend camps were organised, together with visits to Indian Army units and places of interest within reach of cantonments. In barracks there were band concerts and dances. It was not very easy to keep men from getting bored during the long months without any of the outside distractions to be found in their own country, but considerable success was achieved judging by the remarkable lack of crime and the excellent record of health during the whole time the Regiment spent in India.

After the financial and economic crisis, which hit Great Britain, the United States of America and most of the countries in Western Europe in 1930/31, strenuous efforts were made to encourage the soldier to save his money against the day when he would get his discharge and have to make a start in civil life. A regimental savings fund was instituted and organized by Captain D. French Blake,¹ an officer who devoted the whole of his time to the welfare of the soldier. When the Regiment finally left India, it was reported to have saved a larger sum than had any other British regiment overseas at that time.

Polo was the chief distraction of the officers throughout the seven years spent in India. Almost every officer in the Regiment played the game keenly. Ponies were all too expensive, but with organization and management, coupled with hard work in the training of ponies and players, the game was brought within the means of almost everyone. Played as it was as much for the credit of the Regiment as for personal self-satisfaction, polo achieved nothing but good. It is difficult to think of a better way to occupy the time and absorb the surplus energies of twenty or more young officers in the prime of life on foreign service.

¹ Later Lieutenant-Colonel D. French Blake. Accidentally killed on Active Service in Tunisia in 1943 whilst commanding the 2nd Lothian and Border Horse R.A.C.

The work put in at the game, both at SIALKOT and RISALPUR, was not without reward, although the supreme prize of winning the Inter-Regimental was denied. The Regiment reached the final in 1935 and again in 1938, won the Subalterns' Cup in 1936, and was only beaten in the finals in 1938. The Team won the Connaught Cup in DELHI and the Ezra Cup in CALCUTTA in 1935, besides winning numerous local handicap tournaments. Captains Butler, Critchley and Harrap, Major Hirsch and Lieutenant Cordy-Simpson were probably the five best players, but there were many others who helped, at different times, to achieve minor successes, and found plenty of exercise and enjoyment in station polo.

The Regiment kept a pack of hounds at RISALPUR under the mastership of Major J. Hawker, which hunted the jackal over the country from MARDAN, in the north, to the KABUL RIVER, in the south, on every half holiday from November to April.

What with the demands of soldiering, regimental games, polo and hunting, there were few idle hours, and officers and other ranks found that their time abroad seldom hung heavily on their hands.

In the hot weather there was the usual migration of married families and leave parties to the hills. GHORA DAKA, some twelve miles from MURREE, was allotted to the Regiment as its hill station, and was retained throughout the period of the tour. Much trouble was taken to improve accommodation, sports grounds, and amenities. It was, on the whole, a popular resort and did much to maintain the remarkably high standard of health enjoyed alike by men, women and children.

Married families play no small part in regimental life abroad. Many of the families of the Regiment remained overseas for the whole nine years spent abroad, and, although cantonments had little to offer in the way of social amenities, their unfailing readiness to make the best of things and lend a helping hand whenever needed,

contributed a great deal to the happiness and contentment of the Regiment as a whole.

In January, 1935, the Regiment lost, on retirement, Regimental-Serjeant-Major E. Loader and Bandmaster A. E. Hopkins, who were succeeded respectively by Squadron-Serjeant-Major H. Burder and Bandmaster A. L. Streeter. Mr. Loader had joined the 13th Hussars in 1910. He served throughout the First World War in France and Mesopotamia and afterwards in the Afghan War of 1918, being twice wounded in France. Mr. Hopkins was appointed Bandmaster to the 13th Hussars in 1912, and had seen active service in the South African War with the Somerset Light Infantry. Both these warrant officers had given long and loyal service to their Regiment.

His Excellency The Viceroy of India, Lord Willingdon, paid a brief visit to the Regiment at SIALKOT on the 20th of April, 1935, and all officers were presented to him in the Mess. The King's Silver Jubilee was celebrated on the 5th and 6th of May, 1935, with a regimental sports meeting, but the Regiment was to mourn the passing of His Majesty King George V on the 20th of January, 1936, which cast a gloom over the whole Empire. The Commanding Officer wrote to Her Majesty Queen Mary expressing deep sympathy on behalf of the Regiment, and the following reply was received from Her Majesty's Private Secretary:—

‘The Queen has read your letter of the 24th of January and commands me to thank you warmly for it. I am also to assure you how deeply touched Her Majesty has been by the loyal and kind thoughts of all ranks of her Regiment at this moment of her grievous sorrow for the death of our late beloved Sovereign. I would also add that the Colonel-in-Chief deeply appreciates this message of heartfelt sympathy from her Regiment and sends to one and all Her Majesty's sincere and grateful thanks.’

On the 21st of October, 1936, the Regiment moved to RISALPUR to relieve the 14th/20th Hussars. Here they

joined the Risalpur Cavalry Brigade, consisting of 'F' Battery Royal Horse Artillery, Skinners Horse, and the Guides Cavalry, under the command of Brigadier H. Macdonald,¹ a particularly fine soldier and a great sportsman.

RISALPUR had been the final station in India of the 18th Royal Hussars before the amalgamation of the two Regiments in 1922, and there were still a few officers and non-commissioned officers who remembered it from those days.

The death occurred in Scotland of Colonel Sir Fitzroy Maclean, Bt., on the 22nd of November, 1936, at the great age of 101. He had joined the 13th Light Dragoons (as the 13th Hussars were then designated) in 1852. He served in the Crimea, but was on the sick list on the 25th of October and did not take part in the Balaclava Charge, though he was present at the fight at BULGANAH and at ALMA and other battles. He afterwards rose to command of the Regiment in 1871 and retired in 1873.

Lord Baden-Powell arrived at RISALPUR on the 20th of February, 1937, and stayed with the Regiment until the 28th. On the 22nd of February he celebrated his 80th birthday at a dinner with the officers, after visiting the MALAKAND where many years before he had been on active service. The following day the Regiment held a ceremonial parade at which the Colonel presented the new drum banners and made the following address:—

‘Comrades: It is a great joy to me to be back once more on parade with the Regiment which I joined sixty-one years ago.

‘I am delighted to find all ranks just as smart and well turned out as ever.

‘I am still more delighted to hear of your good conduct and efficiency in the field and success in sport. I have heard this not only from your own officers but also from Army Headquarters at DELHI. The good name

¹Later Major-General H. Macdonald, C.B., D.S.O.

of the Regiment does not depend merely on its gallantry in war but also, and largely, on its doings in peace. You have made good a reputation for yourselves, and I congratulate you.

'I have now the pleasing duty of handing to you the new drum banners.

'You have just said goodbye to the old banners with their record of the history of the Regiment in wars for generations back; a splendid record won by your predecessors through their gallantry and self-sacrifice even to death for King and Country. But in saying goodbye to the banners you are not saying goodbye to that record. The new banners carry forward the same record still to inspire you but with the fresh field before you for developing still further that splendid spirit of courage and discipline if war should come and that spirit of loyal efficiency and clean sport in peace.

'So I give into your hands with these banners the good name of the Regiment and I do so with confidence that you will do your best to maintain it bright and untarnished like these banners whether it be in peace or in war.

'From my heart I wish you all success in doing so.'

Before leaving Lord Baden-Powell visited barracks and serjeants' and corporals' messes. It was with the greatest regret that the Regiment said goodbye to their famous Colonel on his last visit. He retired on the 15th of July, 1938, being succeeded by Colonel J. J. Richardson, who had commanded the 13th Hussars in Mesopotamia with great distinction during the First World War.

The history of the Regiment would not be complete if mention were not made of the Regimental Memorials which were at this time erected.

The 13th Hussars Memorial in the Memorial Church at BAGHDAD took the form of a stained-glass window bearing the 13th Hussars crest and the inscription:—'Sacred to the memory of ninety-eight officers and men of the 13th

Hussars who were killed in action or died in Mesopotamia during the Great War 1916-1918.' The second was a reading desk for the clergy placed in Holy Trinity Church, SIALKOT, in memory of the officers, other ranks and children of the Regiment who died while stationed at SIALKOT. The third was a Tablet erected in the Church at RISALPUR in memory of four men of the Regiment who died in 1936 and 1937.

On the 1st of July, 1937, Lieutenant-Colonel S. V. Kennedy was promoted and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel C. H. Miller assumed command. Lieutenant-Colonel Miller¹ had recently returned to the Regiment after commanding the Transjordan Frontier Force where he was succeeded by Major J. I. Chrystall.²

Whilst the Regiment was occupied with soldiering and sport at this frontier station, the storm clouds were rapidly gathering in Europe.

Italy had gained in strength since the access to power of Mussolini in 1923, but by 1932 he had begun to entertain serious ambitions to turn his country into a world power and seek for colonial expansion with a view to gaining prestige and a measure of self-sufficiency in raw materials. He had turned his eyes towards Abyssinia, and, after carefully laid plans, had invaded that country without a declaration of war in October, 1935. By May, 1936, ADDIS ABABA had been occupied by the Italians and all organised resistance had come to an end. This act of aggression had no effect upon the activities or thoughts of the Regiment any more than it had upon those of the vast majority of the people of England. Only the few saw

¹ Later Major-General C. H. Miller, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. During the Second World War commanded the 5th Cavalry Brigade, was D.A. & Q.M.G. in Egypt and 8th Army in the Western Desert. Afterwards Major-General Administration of the 18th and 15th Army Groups in North Africa, Sicily and Italy and of Southern Command at home.

² Later Brigadier J. I. Chrystall, C.B.E., M.C. During the Second World War commanded the 6th Cavalry Brigade and later the Cairo Area. As T/Major-General was president of the Armistice Commission in Syria.

grave dangers ahead and it was left to Mr. Winston Churchill, almost alone, to sound the 'alarm'.

Since 1933 Hitler and his Nazis had gone from strength to strength, and, by September, 1938, Austria had been swallowed and Czechoslovakia was being threatened with the same fate on the pretext of their so-called oppressive rule of the German population in the Sudeten areas.

The rôle of Britain's Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, as mediator during this crisis, is a matter of world history, and it is only necessary to record here that, on the 26th of September, the War Office and Air Ministry called out the anti-aircraft and coast defence units of the Territorial Army and the fighter squadrons of the Auxiliary Air Force. On the following day the Admiralty announced that it had been decided to mobilise the British Fleet.

Meanwhile the Regiment was still far from these momentous events. In September, 1938, it was busy packing up preparatory to its return to England in the normal course.

On the 29th of September the special train was in the siding at RISALPUR. Married families and baggage were already on board, when a telegram was received from Army Headquarters to say that officers and other ranks of the Regiment would travel to KARACHI, as scheduled, but that the married families were to remain in India until further orders. This was a shattering blow and gave rise to every sort of speculation. But the feelings of bitter disappointment amongst the families were not to last long. At midnight the order was cancelled. Women and children were quickly re-entrained, determined this time to get undressed and under any circumstances to remain so until the train started. The Regiment got away intact the following morning, and arrived safely in KARACHI after a particularly hot and dusty journey across the Scinde Desert. They detrained in the middle of an intense heat wave only to be told that the ship—their old friend H.M.T. SOMERSETSHIRE—had had her sailing date indefinitely

postponed. Meanwhile the Regiment would proceed to camp and await events. Everything possible was done by the local command to make things comfortable, and, fortunately, the delay only proved of short duration. On the 9th of October orders to embark were received and H.M.T. SOMERSETSHIRE was soon in the Indian Ocean on her course for England.

The counter-orders and delays had been caused by the acute crisis in Europe, which was only temporarily allayed by the signing of the Munich Agreement on the 29th of September. Britain and France had yielded to German pressure, and the Sudetenland had been absorbed by the Reich. Many thought that war had been averted, but there were others who saw only a short respite and were convinced that Hitler intended nothing less than a war of aggression as soon as he considered the moment ripe.

Although the Regiment had had a good time in India, all ranks left with few regrets. They had been abroad just over nine years, and it was time to see England again. There were many who felt keenly the loss of their horses and the final break with the age-old traditions of the mounted arm. But they knew that cavalry could not fight tanks any more than rifles could repel bombs, and they looked forward to the new mechanized rôle with genuine enthusiasm. The spirit of the Regiment would remain the same whether mechanized or horsed, and its fundamental traditions would not be altered by any change of equipment. The leadership, discipline, teamwork and comradeship were there as sound foundations. The Regiment had had nothing but good reports from superior officers throughout its tour overseas, and all ranks were ready for whatever fate might have in store.

After an uneventful journey home, the Regiment landed at SOUTHAMPTON on the 31st of October, 1938, and on the same day marched past their Commanding Officer at the entrance to their new quarters at SHORNCLIFFE.

Chapter 3

WITH THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1940

TRAINING AS A MECHANIZED DIVISIONAL CAVALRY
REGIMENT - MOBILISATION - OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND
WORLD WAR - THE 'PHONEY' WAR - FIGHTING IN BELGIUM
AND FRANCE - DUNKIRK

RISBOROUGH Barracks, SHORNCLIFFE, had only recently been completed on modern lines to hold a mechanized unit, and afforded greater comfort and facilities for all ranks than had ever been experienced before.

Everyone was granted leave in rotation, and not until the 10th of January, 1939, did the whole Regiment begin training as the mechanized cavalry of the 1st Division, whose headquarters were at ALDERSHOT. This Division was commanded by Major-General The Hon. H. R. L. G. Alexander, and the Regiment was fortunate to come under such a distinguished fighting commander, who not only understood training for war but was to become one of the greatest Generals of the Second World War.

The problem confronting the Commanding Officer was a difficult one. There was very little training equipment and what there was came slowly in small quantities. The number of instructors available for driving and maintenance, and for weapon and wireless training, was quite inadequate, and large numbers of officers and non-commissioned officers had to be sent on courses. In addition the areas available for training were strictly limited. But there was no time to waste and a start had to be made somehow.

The War Office made a very small grant of £10 to

enable the Regiment to equip a Driving and Maintenance School by purchase in the open market of sectionalized engines and mechanical parts of all sorts for instructional purposes. This sum was entirely inadequate, and it was only by the generosity and patriotism of the Rootes Group, Lucas Ltd., and the local garages, who gave freely almost everything necessary, that it was possible to set up a school at all. Later, when the Militia were called up, this grant was increased to £100, but, by that time, the school was a complete going concern and the money was never expended.

In spite of all difficulties, training was quickly organised and periodical meetings in the canteen were held which the whole Regiment attended. Here the problem was explained, the responsibilities of officers and non-commissioned officers laid down, and plans given out. Novel and unorthodox methods had to be adopted. The following two examples are worth recording.

Members of the serjeants' mess could not be spared from their normal duties during working hours, so the Regimental-Serjeant-Major was told that any member of the serjeants' mess could take out a vehicle after working hours with any qualified driver and prepare himself for driving test.

The band was to form the Regimental motor-cyclist troop. But, when nineteen new motor-cycles arrived, there were no instructors available. Each bandsman, therefore, was told that he was to be given a motor-cycle as a birthday present. The official handbooks and instructions were issued and dates laid down on which tests and inspections would be carried out. The bandsmen were then instructed to find for themselves ways and means of learning to ride and maintain their motor-cycles.

Needless to say, the response given in both cases was enthusiastic, maximum economy in manpower and time was achieved, no one hurt himself or got into trouble with the police, and the results were most successful.

There is no doubt that the British soldier will tackle any job provided he understands what it is all about. This is the logical and very desirable result of improved education in the Army. Having raised the soldier to a higher standard, he will show his best if given responsibility in the task for which he is qualified, and then trusted to carry it out.

There are those who have said that 'good grooms make bad chauffeurs', and others who have written disparaging remarks of the cavalryman, describing him as having been reactionary towards mechanization, and reluctant to accept the trend of modern invention affecting future warfare.

But the great majority of soldiers who joined cavalry regiments between the wars were far more mechanically minded than horse minded, and welcomed with intense interest and keenness all forms of mechanized training. The fact that there were officers who preferred spending their leisure (and incidentally their money) in mounted sports and games, and derived great pleasure and healthy exercise from so doing, is a poor basis from which to deduce that they were opposed to the development of modern methods of warfare. Be that as it may, it is the duty of the regimental officer and soldier to make himself efficient in the weapons and material with which he is equipped, and the cavalryman was to show, in the coming conflict, that he could handle modern weapons and equipment as well as anyone, once given the opportunities for training with them.

There was certainly no lack of willingness and enthusiasm on the part of all ranks of the Regiment in those early days of change; only an appalling and disheartening lack of the necessary means of every sort with which to get down to work.

A limited number of Light Tanks arrived in due course, but most of these were well-worn training vehicles. On arrival only a small proportion were mechanically sound

WITH THE B.E.F. IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1940
enough to get from the railway siding to the barracks
without breaking down.

Preparations against air raids and gas attacks were put in hand. Air-raid shelters were constructed; cleansing stations for dealing with cases of gas contamination were built and equipped; trenches were dug in and around barracks, and all buildings were fitted with 'black-out'.

Major-General Alexander paid several visits to the Regiment and gave valuable advice and encouragement in tactical training in the new rôle.

On the 15th of July Her Majesty Queen Mary—Colonel-in-Chief—visited the Regiment. It was a perfect summer's day and a full programme had been arranged. After visiting married quarters, Her Majesty inspected the Regiment drawn up on parade and then lunched in the mess with the officers and their wives. In the afternoon a garden party was held on the recreation ground to which all old comrades of the Regiment had been invited. There was a very large and representative gathering and many had the honour of being presented to Queen Mary. The Band troop gave a motor-cyclist display, which demonstrated how well the bandsmen had carried out their work in 'self-training'. Before leaving, Her Majesty inspected the men of the newly constituted Militia, whose arrival happened to coincide with Her Majesty's visit. Those posted to the Regiment arrived in the morning, were hurriedly fitted out with uniforms, and were on parade for inspection by their Colonel-in-Chief in the afternoon.

That evening a Regimental re-union dinner was held in the large mess-room. About four hundred sat down and a very cheerful evening resulted. Afterwards an all-ranks ball was held in the gymnasium with music provided by the Regimental dance band. The following day there was Church Parade in the Garrison Stadium. The Service was conducted by Canon Arthur Helps, Chaplain to the 18th Hussars during the First World War. As the old familiar hymns were sung, there can have been few who did not

feel a lump in the throat as they looked back upon their years in the Regiment and thought of the dangers ahead which faced their country. And so the Old Comrades of the Regiment dispersed to their homes after a great reunion—the last for many years to come—made all the more memorable by the presence of their Colonel-in-Chief.

The following letter was received a few days later by the Commanding Officer from Her Majesty's Equerry:—

'I am commanded by Queen Mary to tell you that it gave Her Majesty the greatest pleasure to spend the day last Saturday with her own Regiment. Queen Mary was very pleased to meet the Officers and their wives at luncheon in the Mess, and so many of the Old Comrades of the Regiment at the garden party in the afternoon. Her Majesty desires me to convey an expression of her special gratitude to you and Mrs. Miller for your hospitality and of her very best wishes to all ranks of the Regiment.'

A few days later Lieutenant-Colonel C. H. Miller was promoted and succeeded in command by Major D. A. Stirling. At the same time Major E. S. Sword became second-in-command.

The call-up of the Conscript Militiamen was a new landmark in the military history of Great Britain. Those who joined the Regiment, together with the volunteer recruits, were a fine type and quickly settled down to the life and training. At the same time officers and men of the Reserve and Special Reserve were called up. When other rank reservists arrived, orders were received to form them into Pioneer Companies and they were camped as separate units near barracks. This caused bitter disappointment, and it was heart-rending to have to part with so many good non-commissioned officers and soldiers. But there was no alternative. They were in excess of the numbers required to bring the Regiment up to War Establishment, and were untrained in mechanized equipment. These men went to France with the advanced

parties of the British Expeditionary Force and did fine work at the ports and railheads in the early days of the war. They returned to England later, when many joined the Yeomanry Regiments which went to Palestine in January, 1940, with the 1st Cavalry Division under Major-General G. Clark.¹

Some thirty reservists from the Royal Tank Corps had been posted to the Regiment to assist in mechanization. These men provided a small cadre of skilled and experienced tank gunners and drivers who were to prove of incalculable value. The Regiment will not forget the services which they rendered, not only in training, but on the battlefield.

Meanwhile the situation in Europe was rapidly deteriorating. The British and French guarantees to Poland, announced on the 31st of March, showed the British final and unmistakable determination to resist further aggression by Hitler. The Italian invasion of Albania, which had opened on Good Friday, had resulted in further guarantees to Greece and Roumania in the same terms as the assurance to Poland.

August was a time of feverish activity for the Regiment. Stores and equipment came pouring in and work fell particularly hard upon Lieutenant-Colonel and Quartermaster A. G. Ellery and his staff, who worked with untiring energy. Lieutenant-Colonel Ellery was born in the 18th Hussars when his father was serving at Colchester in 1883. He served with the Royal Suffolk Hussars Yeomanry in the South African war and joined the 18th Hussars at York in 1904. He was with his Regiment throughout the First World War and at the outbreak of the Second War was one of the senior quartermasters in the Army. He was unfortunately over age for active service. After thirty-five years of devoted and efficient service to his Regiment and the Army, he was succeeded as quartermaster on the 9th of September by Regimental-

¹ Later Lieutenant-General G. Clark, C.B., M.C.

Serjeant-Major H. Burder, the only member of the Regiment who had embarked with the 13th Hussars in India for France on the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

At dawn on the 1st of September, 1939, the German Forces invaded Poland and on the same day a state of emergency was declared in Great Britain.

At 11 a.m. on the 3rd of September the British ultimatum expired and the British Empire was once again at war. That day His Majesty the King broadcast a message to the peoples of his Empire:—

‘In this grave hour,’ he said, ‘perhaps the most fateful in our history, I send to every household of my peoples, both at home and overseas, this message, spoken with the same depth of feeling for each one of you as if I were able to cross your threshold and speak to you myself. For the second time in the lives of most of us we are at war. . . . We are called, with our Allies to meet the challenge of a principle which, if it were to prevail, would be fatal to any civilised order in the world . . . for the sake of all that we ourselves hold dear, and of the world’s order and peace, it is unthinkable that we should refuse to meet the challenge. . . . The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead, and war can no longer be confined to the battlefield. But we can only do the right as we see the right, and reverently commit our cause to God. If one and all we keep resolutely faithful to it, ready for whatever service or sacrifice it may demand, then with God’s help we shall prevail. May He bless and keep us all.’

On the 15th of September, the Regiment left SHORNCLIFFE for embarkation at SOUTHAMPTON, travelling by road in their own vehicles. Colonel J. J. Richardson—Colonel of the Regiment—stood on the main road from FOLKESTONE to ASHFORD to take the salute as the Regiment marched past. In the brief space of ten months they had changed from a mounted regiment on the North

WITH THE B.E.F. IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1940
West Frontier of India to a mechanized divisional cavalry
regiment mobilised for war in Europe.

The Regiment was gravely deficient in equipment and certainly not fully trained. Third line transport was only provided on the last afternoon. This consisted of every sort of vehicle—bakers' vans, grocers' lorries and the like—all in their peace-time glory, green, red and blue, with their late owners' names still on them. This was too much for regimental pride, and, although no orders were issued, the men spent their last night repainting them khaki. At the start next day they were all decently covered.

Only three days had been spent on the ranges with the new weapons and no machine gun had more than two ammunition belts. Out of twenty-eight tanks, only twelve had shoulder pieces and so were in a condition to fight, and many drivers had hardly ever driven a tracked-vehicle except on the training field. But in spite of everything the Regiment was 'off' to war, and all ranks could, at least, feel that they had done their best to fit themselves for the grim struggle ahead. They certainly had the supreme confidence so characteristic of the British soldier.

Surely due praise must be given to the officers, non-commissioned officers and men who had carried out this tremendous transformation. But let us hope that the Nation may take warning from yet another example of the terrible danger of unpreparedness.

* * *

The Regiment embarked at SOUTHAMPTON on the 18th and arrived at BREST on the following morning, where they remained for some ten days before travelling by train to the ARRAS area. The move of the British Expeditionary Force across to France worked perfectly and without any enemy interference.

Whilst the German air and armoured forces were destroying Poland, the Western Front was almost entirely left alone, except for an unceasing flow of propaganda and an insidious fifth column activity. This period, which

lasted for some eight months, has become known as the 'phoney' war. Whatever harm may have been done by undermining the morale of the French and Belgians, the British Expeditionary Force was afforded time for concentration and further training, which was badly needed.

The Regiment was still incomplete in many items of equipment. But when the Divisional Commander was informed of the state of affairs many of the deficiencies were flown out by air from England, and training was renewed in earnest.

The Regiment spent most of the 'phoney' war in billets around MONCHY, a few miles south-east of ARRAS on the CAMBRAI road. Life was fairly comfortable and in many respects enjoyable. Lights were forbidden in farm buildings after sunset, but Squadrons organised their own concerts and there were E.N.S.A.¹ entertainments to be seen in ARRAS, which did much to relieve the monotony of the long winter evenings. All ranks were kept fit with daily compulsory Physical Training, cross-country runs, route marches, and inter-troop and squadron football.

The Regiment worked very hard at training throughout the winter. It was essential to qualify as many men as possible in driving and maintenance, gunnery and wireless. Basic training schools in these subjects were, therefore, the first consideration. Tactical training came next. There were no text books on the tactical employment of a mechanized divisional cavalry regiment, so the method adopted was to study the tasks which the Regiment was likely to be called upon to carry out, then to practise them as a drill, and finally to carry them out as a tactical exercise in the field at which the Divisional Commander was present to criticise and advise. In this way the winter passed and spring came. Gradually it was found that the Regiment could manœuvre and retain control over a wide area. In the spring Major-General Alexander held a seven-day exercise near the SOMME. This shewed that the

¹ Entertainments National Services Association.

WITH THE B.E.F. IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1940
Regiment had attained a high degree of efficiency and learned many lessons—lessons which were to prove of great value in the campaign now rapidly approaching.

During these months there were several 'alarms' and on each occasion the Regiment moved to billets near LA VERDERIE close to the Belgian frontier. These excursions gave all ranks a welcome change although they found that their forward billets in no way compared with those at MONCHY.

On Christmas Day there was a children's party with a Christmas tree from which every child received a present. This was a novelty to the children of the villages and a most popular event. Her Majesty Queen Mary presented each officer with a knitted scarf and the Regimental Comforts Fund sent many gifts of warm clothing for the men. This organisation was started at the outbreak of war by a small committee of past and present officers' wives and, with the assistance of many loyal and generous friends of the Regiment, it continued throughout the war to provide clothing and games.

Balaclava Day was celebrated by the Regiment in the traditional manner. 'C' Squadron decided to hold a dog show in which all the local dogs took part. The prize for the most handsome dog and owner was easily won by Mr. Bernard Gray, the *Daily Mirror* War Correspondent, who presented the officers of the Squadron, when he left just before Z-day, with a silver model of a Light Tank, thanking the Squadron for the happy hours he had spent with all ranks.

The Regiment was visited by the 1st Corps Commander, General Sir John Dill,¹ and frequently by the Divisional Commander. On one occasion outside ROUBAIX, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester had lunch at Regimental Headquarters. Prince Henry had served with

¹ Later Field-Marshal Sir John Dill, G.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., who became C.I.G.S. and afterwards head of the British Joint Staff Mission to Washington.

the 13th Hussars at ALDERSHOT in 1920-1921 in command of the second troop of 'C' Squadron. He transferred to the 10th Royal Hussars when the 13th Hussars were ordered to Ireland during the rebellion.

In this manner the months passed for the Regiment during the 'phoney' war in France, whilst the people in England watched Hitler crush Poland and over-run successively Denmark, Norway and Holland.

Many of the families of the Regiment had remained at SHORNCLIFFE. Mrs. Burder, Mrs. Quick and Mrs. Hilton, whose husbands were all serving in France, were amongst those who played their part as air raid wardens in the early raids in the FOLKESTONE area until July, 1940, when all families were evacuated by the War Office from that part of the coast.

*

*

*

By the end of September, 1939, WARSAW had been occupied and all Polish organised resistance had been crushed. On the 9th of April, the enemy invaded Denmark and Norway. This caused certain troops to be withdrawn from France, and others destined for the British Expeditionary Force to be retained in England.

MAP I

On the 10th of May the Germans entered Holland and Belgium. At 1 p.m. the 'phoney' war was over and the British Expeditionary Force moved forward across the western frontier of Belgium.

Three alternative plans had been discussed by the French High Command to meet this expected invasion. That finally decided upon and put into effect was an advance of the Allied Forces to the general line NAMUR - WAVRE - LOUVAIN - ANTWERP, with the British Expeditionary Force on the sector WAVRE - LOUVAIN.

The British front was to be occupied initially by the 1st Corps (Lieutenant-General M. G. H. Barker¹) on a two-division front on the right, with the 2nd Corps

¹Who had replaced General Sir John Dill when the latter became C.I.G.S.

WITH THE B.E.F. IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1940 (General A. F. Brooke¹) on a one-division front on the left. In the first phase the 12th Lancers (Armoured Car Regiment) were to move to a general line eight miles beyond the RIVER DYLE in observation of the approaches to the bridges from the east, until relieved by the Divisional Cavalry Regiments. The Infantry Divisions were to come up behind in Mechanical Transport, moving by day and night. Instructions were issued in detail for the preparation of defences on the three river lines, DYLE, DENDRE and ESCAUT.

On the 10th of May, the Regiment was at its forward billets at LA VERDERIE where it had been for some time. The first intimation of anything unusual was the bombing of DOUAI during the night of May 9th/10th, which woke everyone up. In the morning the news of the invasion of Holland came over the wireless. Orders from the 1st Division to be ready to move at 1 p.m. soon followed. Lieutenant-Colonel Stirling saw General Alexander, who confirmed the orders to advance to the line of the RIVER DYLE, where the Regiment was to hold about nine thousand yards of front until relieved by the infantry.

The Regiment,² with 'Q' Battery Royal Horse Artillery attached and 'A' Squadron as advanced guard, crossed the frontier at BAISIEUX at 2.30 p.m. Marching via TOURNAI, RENAIX and NINOVE the column passed through BRUSSELS amidst extraordinary scenes of enthusiasm. The vehicles were garlanded with every sort of spring flower and the crowds surged around to welcome the troops. None present could realise what the next few days had in store for them, much less foresee the occasion nearly five years later when the city would again welcome many of the same British regiments on their way through to Germany and final victory.

¹ Later Field-Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, K.G., G.C.B., O.M., D.S.O., Commander-in-Chief Home Forces 1940-41, and Chief of the Imperial General Staff 1941-1947.

² See Appendix II showing the Regiment in the Order of Battle in the B.E.F.

The Regiment reached the DYLE shortly after 8 o'clock that evening and occupied a position from PECROT-CHAUSEE to CORBEEK DYLE. The 4th/7th Dragoon Guards were on the right in a similar rôle covering the 2nd Division and the 15th/19th Hussars were on the left covering the 3rd Division. 'B' Squadron (Major Hawker) took up a position in the right sector of the Regiment's front, 'C' Squadron (Captain Cordy-Simpson) was in the left sector, whilst 'A' Squadron (Major Davies) was in reserve at LEEFDAEL.

Very early on the following morning 'A' Squadron advanced east of the DYLE to an outpost position on the general line from LA BRUYERE to BRUEL with one tank troop from 'B' and 'C' Squadrons respectively attached for reconnaissance. Enemy air activity increased during the day and a carrier troop of 'A' Squadron, which was dug in in a dismounted position covering a Belgian air-field just south of OPVELP, was heavily attacked, but suffered no casualties.

A lot of time was taken up with the interrogation of suspected saboteurs, parachutists and spies, but the enemy fifth column had been skilfully organised, and it was difficult to distinguish them from genuine refugees.

On the 12th the first phase of the advance of the British Expeditionary Force was successfully completed and by 1 p.m. the 3rd Infantry Brigade¹ (1 Div.) had relieved the Regiment on the line of the DYLE and begun to dig in. 'B' and 'C' Squadrons thereupon moved forward east of the river to relieve 'A' Squadron on the outpost line. 'C' Squadron was on the right and 'B' Squadron on the left.

Late that evening, Major Welstead arrived back from leave. He had been in England when the advance started, but had managed to get a taxi at BOULOGNE which took him to DOUAI and then on by another taxi to BRUSSELS, where he made contact with the 2nd Division which sent

¹ Commanded by Brigadier (later Major-General) T. N. F. Wilson, D.S.O. M.C.

him on by army transport to the Regiment. On arrival he took over 'C' Squadron from Captain Cordy-Simpson.

Meanwhile news had been steadily coming in from the 12th Lancers of the enemy advance, and by midday on the 13th it was clear that the Belgians were in full retreat north of TIRLEMONT. The Commanding Officer therefore went forward to Headquarters 12th Lancers, and there heard that there was a gap between the left of the French just south of TIRLEMONT and the right of the Belgians who were in full retreat. He thereupon ordered 'A' Squadron forward to a line of observation about CUMTICH, and Lieutenant Wormald went on with his tank troop into TIRLEMONT, where he found the French apparently unwilling to hold their ground. Early in the afternoon 'A' Squadron was withdrawn into Reserve.

Meanwhile 'C' Squadron lost touch with the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards who had retired on their right, and the Commanding Officer ordered Major Welstead to withdraw his right flank to HAMME MILLE to conform.

On the following morning there were continuous reports of enemy armoured cars and motor-cyclists advancing on 'C' Squadron position from the south-east, and at 12.15 p.m. the first real contact with the enemy occurred. No. 1 Troop ('C' Squadron) under Lieutenant Furness was covering the approaches from the south, when he saw a party of enemy motor-cyclists approaching. His tank opened fire and scored several hits. A few minutes later enemy armoured cars approached. These were also engaged, but the machine gun bullets could be heard rattling off the enemy armour apparently without doing any damage but three armoured cars and a lorry were seen moving off at speed to the cover of a wood.

It is believed that twelve of the enemy were killed in this the first engagement of the Regiment in the war.

Major-General Alexander had, on the previous evening, given Lieutenant-Colonel Stirling permission to withdraw across the DYLE at the latter's discretion. Since the enemy

continued to work round the right flank of the Regiment the following morning Lieutenant-Colonel Stirling issued the necessary orders. 'C' Squadron covered this withdrawal. As the last troop retired, it was chased by enemy motor-cyclists firing pistols until the rearmost carrier gave them a burst of Bren fire to check their ardour.

By 1.30 p.m. the Regiment was west of the DYLE, and three hours later the bridges at both WEERT ST. GEORGE and CORBEEK-DYLE were blown. During this withdrawal six enemy bombers attacked these bridges. They were greeted with intense Light Machine Gun fire from the infantry and one was disabled but was not brought down. Another was engaged by a Spitfire and shot down. Lieutenant Selwyn found the crew dead but collected the log and maps, one of which was reported to reveal the enemy minefields in the North Sea.

Lieutenant Stewart's troop had not reported when 'C' Squadron crossed the DYLE. It transpired that he had waited to collect the crew of a carrier which had broken down. On his way back he found himself cut off by the enemy. He charged through them and made his way across country, but his carrier subsequently overturned. Of the seven non-commissioned-officers and men with him, five were missing, but Lieutenant Stewart himself and Trooper Fox, although wounded, managed to get away on foot and swim the river.

That evening the Regiment retired to the woods south of TERVUEREN where they spent the night, having suffered some eight casualties and lost two carriers.

On the 15th of May the Dutch laid down their arms and, by the 16th, it became clear to the Higher Command that a prolonged defence of the DYLE position was impracticable. Orders were therefore issued for a general withdrawal to the ESCAUT to begin on the night of the 16th/17th May, and to be completed in forty-eight hours.

The day was spent in maintenance and charging wireless batteries. The Divisional Commander arrived and

WITH THE B.E.F. IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1940

congratulated the Commanding Officer on the work of the Regiment in the operations east of the DYLE. Lieutenant Furness, Lance-Serjeant Cooper and Trooper Taylor were mentioned for having particularly distinguished themselves in these operations. That evening orders were received from Headquarters 1st Division that the Regiment was to be prepared to hold the general line OVERYSSCHE - VOSSEM to cover the withdrawal of the infantry if enemy pressure on the right flank made it necessary. Late the following afternoon, it was reported that the 2nd Division on the right had been forced to withdraw and the Regiment took up its position with 'A' Squadron on the right, 'C' Squadron on the left and 'B' Squadron forming a right flank guard. A Company of the Cheshire Regiment (Machine Guns) was placed under command.

At first light on the 17th, a troop of 'C' Squadron went out and discovered some stationary lorries with troops in them at LOOMBEEK. It shot them up and returned to Squadron H.Q., the troop leader remarking that he wouldn't have missed this war for a thousand pounds.

In the rear there was a mass of refugees asking for protection and transport. An ambulance was filled to capacity, and two loads were sent off to BRUSSELS. Three suspected Germans were being held prisoner when suddenly a shower of small mortar bombs went off, thrown from a nearby window. Everyone scattered for cover and when sufficiently recovered, the three prisoners were seen disappearing, together with a party of seven or eight men dressed in dungarees—an example of German fifth column activities which added to the difficulties of forward troops.

At 9.15 a.m. a troop of the Inniskillings arrived to say that they were withdrawing in the north and that the enemy had entered EVERBERG.

Meanwhile the situation of the British Expeditionary Force to the south had become serious. Enemy armoured

and mobile forces were reported to have crossed the OISE and this break-through was a serious threat to rear G.H.Q. and the communications over the SOMME at AMIENS and ABBEVILLE. Retreat in the north, therefore, became necessary, and the Regiment was ordered to retire by bounds as rearguard to the Division. The General's orders to the Commanding Officer were explicit: 'I do not want any infantryman shot at till we are across the RIVER SENNE'.

By 9.30 p.m. the Squadrons were on their way back to a position astride the BRUSSELS - WATERLOO road covering the retirement through the city. On the way back two carriers were blown up by our own anti-tank mines but the crews were unhurt. In terrible contrast to the happy scenes of a few days previous, fear had now gripped the hearts of the people. Whilst some of the troops were halted in the streets, a civilian warned them that the Germans were entering the town and that the Burgomaster was at that moment going forward to meet the enemy. Lieutenant-Colonel Stirling immediately ordered all troops to withdraw over the SENNE bridge and a few minutes after the rear troop was across the bridge was blown. That night the Regiment took up an outpost position west of the RIVER SENNE to cover the approaches from the south-east, and, by 9 a.m. on the 18th, they were astride the ASSCHE - ENGHEN road. The Germans did not press their advance. At mid-day the Regiment was back to the road from NINOVE, and, by 4 p.m. the same evening, was west of the RIVER DENDRE, where the 1st and 2nd Infantry Brigades (1 Div.) were holding the line.

That night the Regiment was placed under command of 1 Corps with one Squadron under command of the 5th Division (Major-General H. E. Franklyn¹). This Squadron was formed by 'A' Squadron (Major Davies) with deficiencies in vehicles made up from the remainder

¹ Later General Sir Harold Franklyn, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C., C.-in-C., Home Forces, 1943-1946.

WITH THE B.E.F. IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1940
of the Regiment. The Regiment (less 'A' composite Squadron) was now ordered to move to France, and, marching via RENAIX, eventually crossed the frontier at TOUFFLERS and reached its old billet at LA VERDERIE on the morning of the 20th, where 'A' Squadron was found already there.

The march was an appalling experience. The roads were full of the retreating Army and were further congested by fleeing refugees with every kind of car, cart and wheelbarrow. Many roads were completely blocked with burning vehicles, some full of ammunition, as a result of enemy air action. There was little, if any, traffic control in spite of the efforts of a few officers who did their best to get some order out of chaos.

During the march, Serjeant-Major Carter captured a German disguised as a taxi-driver in a blue car, which had been seen on several occasions preceding the enemy advance. He was handed over to Headquarters 1st Division, but his car was kept by Regimental Headquarters. Report has it that the driver was subsequently dealt with as a spy.

*

*

*

The story of 'A' Squadron during the 18th and 19th must now be told. When Major Davies left the Regiment on the evening of the 18th of May, he was ordered to report to Headquarters 5th Division at WODECQ. He was told that his task would be to cover the bridges over the RIVER DENDRE between LESSINES and GRAMMONT. Major Davies thereupon ordered his squadron to rendez-vous just west of GRAMMONT, whilst he went, with Major Russell, to Headquarters 5th Division. The road was very congested and near OGY he met the G.O.C. 5th Division in his car going in the opposite direction. From the conversation which ensued, Major Davies concluded that his squadron was not required to come under command of 5th Division; being rather puzzled by this apparent change of orders, he went on to WODECQ but found that Headquarters 5th Division had left. He then decided to

report to Headquarters 1 Corps at FLOBECQ, where he arrived just after 1 a.m. on the 19th. Here he received a cordial welcome from a staff captain who exclaimed: 'Thank God you have turned up. I have been waiting for you and Lieutenant-Colonel Lumsden (12th Lancers), and I have just heard that he is on his way'. A few minutes later Lieutenant-Colonel Lumsden came in.

Major Davies's squadron was placed under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Lumsden, who ordered him to hold a sector of the line along the RIVER DENDRE until noon on the following day, with the 12th Lancers on his right; but what units he would find on his left was not known. On completion of this task he was to retire across the ESCAUT by the bridge at TOURNAI and come into reserve. All the bridges over the RIVER DENDRE were reported to have been destroyed.

Major Davies then returned to his Squadron and gave out his orders to his troop leaders. The troops moved up and were soon in their positions. When daylight came, it was found that the bridges had been only partially blown, and that, in at least two cases, Armoured Fighting Vehicles could easily cross. But all was quiet and at noon in accordance with orders the squadron began to withdraw. Nos. 2 and 5 Troops on the right moved back via FLOBECQ - ELLEZELLES - RENAIX unmolested, and, at 5.30 p.m., reached LA VERDERIE where they were joined by the remainder of the Regiment on the following day.

Nos. 1, 3, 4 and 6 Troops, who were on the left under Lieutenant D. Wormald, had a more exciting experience. This part of the squadron had been ordered to retire independently via NEDERBRAKEL and RENAIX. Shortly after they had started to move back, they were stopped by a staff officer and Lieutenant Wormald was ordered to report to Major-General Alexander. It was explained to him that the right flank of the infantry in that area had been left completely open, and that he was to form a right flank guard until the infantry could be embussed and got

away. At a later interview with the Brigadier commanding the 3rd Infantry Brigade, the situation was explained, as far as it was known, and he was told that the infantry was not expected to get on the move before six o'clock that evening.

Lieutenant Wormald selected three bounds for his delaying action, and, by 3 p.m., his troops were in position in the forward bound which was found clear of the enemy. A short time later No. 4 Troop reported enemy approaching LA LIVARD and No. 1 Troop became completely surrounded near OGY. The latter was ordered to get out as best it could, and the troop serjeant broke his way through but, taking his orders rather too literally, retired to TOURNAI. At 3.35 p.m. permission was given to retire to the second bound, a few miles in rear. Half an hour later No. 4 troop opened fire at 600 yards on enemy advancing up the road, and inflicted some casualties. Shortly afterwards, permission was given to retire to the third bound. About five o'clock a troop of the 17th Field Regiment opened fire on FLOBECQ, and this helped to delay the enemy. A few minutes later, a message was received from Headquarters Infantry Brigade to say that they expected to be embussed in about an hour's time. The troops hung on to their positions without serious difficulty till 7.45 p.m. when Lieutenant Wormald ordered them to retire to TOURNAI having heard nothing further from the Infantry Brigade. Trooper Cheal, the despatch rider, had found Brigade Headquarters empty and burning and had been heavily machine gunned from the air all the way down the road.

The troops reached TOURNAI as it was getting dark but found the bridges blown ahead of them. Someone had evidently been too hasty in thinking that all troops were across. Some officers on motor-cycles had already been sent to reconnoitre for another crossing but they had failed to return. Lieutenant Wormald thereupon ordered his men to drive their vehicles into the river and, crossing

on foot by a broken bridge, succeeded in reaching LA VERDERIE at about one o'clock in the morning of the 20th.

This incident is a good example of the difficulties of demolition during a retreat. Although these actions did not involve heavy fighting they have been recounted in some detail because they were of considerable importance and were typical operations in a withdrawal of this nature. A retreat is perhaps the most difficult operation of war. Seldom can it be carried out in a tidy or orderly manner. Good communications do not exist. Accurate information is hard to obtain. False rumours and alarms are all too frequent, and definite orders do not reach subordinate commanders. A great deal depends, therefore, upon the initiative and fighting qualities of the junior leader and individual soldier. This is clearly shown in the story of 'A' Squadron narrated above.

When the Regiment had reassembled at LA VERDERIE it was found that it had lost sixteen tanks and twenty-four carriers, most of which had been abandoned after being destroyed. Casualties were not heavy, but eight other ranks were known to be missing and one officer (Lieutenant Stewart) and one other rank were wounded. The strength of the Regiment on this date was twenty-five officers and three hundred and eighty-seven other ranks.

The Regiment was now reformed into two composite squadrons, 'A' Squadron under Major Davies and 'B' Squadron under Major Hawker, while 'C' Squadron, under Captain Cordy-Simpson, contained the dismounted personnel in lorries. Major Welstead took over the duties of Liaison Officer with the Headquarters under which the Regiment happened to be placed.

*

*

*

On the 21st of May the Regiment came under command of the 48th Division (Major-General A. F. A. N. Thorne¹) and moved to PLANARD and then to AIX. 'C' Squadron was used to protect Divisional Headquarters and the

¹ Later General Sir Andrew Thorne, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

Commanding Officer and squadron leaders went forward to reconnoitre routes and possible positions on either side of a wood just east of the frontier in case the Regiment should be required to cover the Division's retreat. Nothing materialised, however, and on the evening of the 22nd the Regiment moved to NOMAIN. On the following day it was ordered to FLEURBAIX, where it came under

MAP 2 command of G.H.Q.

The Commanding Officer lost no time in reporting to Headquarters and recounts: 'A profound gloom reigned and I felt very depressed until I was shown into the room of Brigadier Oliver Leese,¹ when the whole atmosphere immediately changed. He gave me a short resumé of the position of the British Expeditionary Force and I was ordered to report to Headquarters Macforce² at CASSEL, where I would receive detailed orders. I certainly left his room with a feeling that here was someone who knew exactly what had to be done and the best way of doing it. It was very heartening.'

The general situation continued to deteriorate. On the 21st of May the British Expeditionary Force communications across the SOMME had been severed and BOULOGNE invested. By the evening of the 22nd enemy armoured forces were approaching CALAIS, and, on the 23rd, the enemy had established bridgeheads across the canal at AIRE and ST. OMER. There was now no doubt that the position of the British Army was very serious.

That night, the Regiment—less 'B' Squadron—moved to CASSEL where it arrived at 5 a.m. There it found a deserted city. The population had departed almost to a man, having suffered severe bomb attacks. The Regiment was immediately disposed to repel any enemy advance from the south-west. Patrols were sent forward to the FÔRET DE CLAIRMARAIS, where the enemy had formed a

¹ Later Lieutenant-General Sir Oliver Leese, K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.

² A Force formed under command of Major-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir Mason) MacFarlane, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

bridgehead over the canal. Very heavy bombing and shelling of the roads near the village of CLAIRMARAIS occurred during the afternoon, when an Indian mule transport convoy and many civilians suffered heavy casualties. It was a pathetic sight to see the Indian drivers bewildered and unable to hit back.

Whilst in this area a R.A.O.C. vehicle park was found at LE NIEPPE. A party consisting of Majors Sword, Westead and Russell, some drivers and an escort, were sent off to collect enough vehicles to remount the Regiment. The escort picketed the area, whilst the cars and lorries were started up and driven off. This event took place within 2,000 yards of the enemy armour on the edge of the FÔRET DE CLAIRMARAIS, and along a road which had been patrolled by German armoured cars half an hour previously.

About 5 p.m. Lieutenant Furness spotted a concentration of enemy to the south of the forest, and opened fire with all his weapons at 800 yards range. The enemy replied and one tank was hit, but there were no casualties. Patrolling continued during the morning of the 25th, but that evening the Regiment was ordered by G.H.Q. to return to FLEURBAIX and come into reserve. Here 'B' Squadron rejoined having been in action the previous day, south of the FÔRET DE NIEPPE, under command of the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards, where contact had been made with the Germans. Two tanks were hit by the enemy, and Troop - Serjeant - Major Denness, Serjeant Hubbard, Troopers Lofrey and Oliver were killed. Lieutenant Akers-Douglas examined Serjeant Hubbard's tank after it had been set on fire by an anti-tank gun. All the crew were killed instantaneously, and, as it was impossible to recover the bodies, a cross was placed on the tank, and they were left.

On the 25th the situation in the north and on the left flank had got so bad that it was decided to withdraw the British Expeditionary Force to the YPRES - COMINES

CANAL. By the 26th the British, French and Belgians were holding a semicircular line about ninety-seven miles in length with both flanks resting in the sea. The immediate problem facing the Higher Command was to shorten this perimeter, and plans were made for the withdrawal of the British Expeditionary Force to a DUNKIRK bridgehead.

Early on the 26th the Regiment was placed under command of 2 Corps and moved to KEMMEL, where it arrived at nine o'clock in the morning. Patrols were sent forward to find out if the Belgians had retired from the line north of MENIN. They found the bridges over the YPRES CANAL in that area blown, and reported that the enemy were advancing.

The Regiment now came under command of the 5th Division, and, at mid-day, was ordered to proceed to the line of the Canal south of YPRES to stop the gap caused by the retirement of the Belgians. Squadrons were in position by 1.30 p.m. in co-operation with the 12th Lancers. 'C' Squadron on the right, 'B' Squadron in the centre, and 'A' Squadron on the left. Elements of the 5th Division were already on the front and the 4th Division was on the right from COMINES to MENIN.

'A' Squadron, on the left, moved up to the YPRES area and found that the bridge at VOORMEZELE, and two others at the fork of the Canal north of YPRES, were still intact, although previous reports had stated that they were blown. The Squadron made contact at VLIAMERTINGHE with the 2nd French Division Légère Mécanique which did not appear willing to co-operate, claiming to have been badly knocked about in earlier fighting.

At 4 a.m. on the 27th, the 150th Infantry Brigade took over from the Regiment on the YPRES CANAL, and Squadrons were able to get a little rest; but at 2 p.m. they were ordered to move to the area of PLOEGSTEERT WOOD. Hardly had 'B' and 'C' Squadrons arrived—'A' Squadron was still on its way from YPRES—when the Regiment was ordered to assist a company of the Black Watch, a com-

posite company of the Royal Engineers (4 Div. R.E.), and a section of the 1st Royal Horse Artillery Regiment, to counter-attack and regain the western bank of the Canal near WARNETON, where the enemy had succeeded in forming a bridgehead earlier in the morning. The Regiment concentrated at WARNETON where 'A' Squadron arrived a few minutes after Z-hour.

The counter-attack was launched—'A' Squadron on the right with the WARNETON - COMINES road on their left, 'C' Squadron (dismounted) in the centre with the railway as centre line, and 'B' Squadron on the left. The final objective was the YPRES - COMINES CANAL.

The advance of 'A' and 'C' Squadrons was rapid—the leading tank troop of 'A' Squadron (Lieutenant Wormald) managed to catch the enemy as they were retiring across the Canal at COMINES, and inflicted several casualties. 'B' and 'C' Squadrons had some trouble with Germans in a farm, but Lieutenant Furness drove his tank into the yard and fired into the hay until it was well alight, the entire farm soon catching fire. His tank was hit by armour-piercing bullets and was well riddled, but the crew escaped casualties except the gunner who was hit in the neck and legs. The enemy started heavy shelling and our gunners retaliated with vigour.

By nightfall 'A' and 'C' Squadrons on the right had driven the enemy back across the Canal, and had reached the line of a ditch some two hundred yards from the bank covering the crossings towards COMINES. At 10 p.m. they were relieved by the Black Watch and ordered to withdraw into reserve. 'B' Squadron on the left found itself facing some rising ground on the near side of the Canal, which was held by German Machine Gunners and Infantry. The Squadron was relieved by men of the 3rd Grenadier Guards who attacked this strong point during the night, and succeeded in driving the enemy back.

Major Welstead remained with the Black Watch till midnight when all the Regiment's wounded had been

WITH THE B.E.F. IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1940 evacuated. He was relieved by Captain Bell, who took over liaison duties with the infantry for the remainder of the night. Twenty-two casualties were suffered, including Major Hawker, who was severely wounded in the leg when his tank was hit by an anti-tank shell.

Major Hawker subsequently died of wounds and his loss was deeply felt. He was a gallant and devoted Regimental Officer, who had always worked unsparingly in peace and war for the good of the Regiment and the well-being of the men under his command.

A number of wounded from other units came in to the Regiment's Aid Post which was under Captain Mosley, R.A.M.C., who did an extremely good job of work. It is doubtful whether any of the wounded reached DUNKIRK, and it is presumed that the ambulance lost its way and fell into enemy hands.

When the history of this campaign comes to be written, this counter-attack in which the Regiment played a conspicuous and gallant part, may well prove to have had an important influence upon the subsequent successful retreat from this part of the front.

The Regiment returned to the area of PLOEGSTEERT at one o'clock in the morning, and there spent the remainder of the night 27th/28th. At 9 a.m. the following morning, Lieutenant Stancomb took his troop out to reconnoitre the YPRES - COMINES CANAL, and other patrols went to WARNETON, but no enemy were seen.

The Regiment was now reorganised into one fighting squadron under Major Davies, whilst the remainder with 'A' and 'B' echelons were ordered to destroy their stores and equipment and make their way under Captain Cordy-Simpson to the sea about DUNKIRK.

That evening found R.H.Q. and the one remaining fighting Squadron at VLAMERTINGHE with orders to report to the 50th Division (Major-General G. le Q. Martel¹) to

¹ Later Lieutenant-General Sir Giffard le Q. Martel, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.

cover the withdrawal of the 150th Infantry Brigade from YPRES to POPERINGHE.

At midnight on the 28th of May, the Belgians capitulated and the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force by sea to England was decided upon. 1 and 2 Corps were ordered to withdraw on the night of the 28th/29th May to horse-shoe positions on the line PROVEN - POPERINGHE - YPRES - BIXSCHOOTE.

At 4 a.m. on the 29th, Major Davies took up a position covering the western exits of YPRES, and a rearguard action ensued under heavy enemy shelling and intense and continuous air attack. By mid-day the infantry were dug in at POPERINGHE and at 2 p.m. the Squadron had rallied with R.H.Q. at a farm south of CROMBEKE. The Commanding Officer reported to Headquarters 50th Division where he received orders to cover the withdrawal of the Division over the bridge across the YSER at STAVELE and then to move inside the DUNKIRK perimeter. It was a long wait and the Germans were shelling the bridge before all units were reported across it. At 2 a.m. on the 30th the Regiment reached the perimeter and three hours later arrived at GUYVELDE after a weary and disheartening journey along very bad and congested roads.

During these operations the Regiment lost Serjeant Coward killed and Major Davies severely wounded. Both these casualties occurred from heavy shelling in POPERINGHE, and Major Davies was evacuated to the Casualty Clearing Station at CROMBEKE. The Commanding Officer decided to remove as many as possible who were not too seriously wounded, but it was with the deepest regret that Major Davies, Major Hawker and many others had to be left to fall into enemy hands.

After leaving GUYVELDE it was found impossible, owing to the congestion on the roads, to proceed any further in vehicles and orders were issued for their total destruction. The Regiment was then formed up and marched on foot to BRAY DUNES where Headquarters 1st Division was

found and the Regiment again came under its command.

On arrival at the beach, an area was found where the troops dug holes in the sand and were soon asleep. Lieutenant-Colonel Stirling reported to General Alexander who expressed his delight at seeing the Regiment move into the perimeter a well-disciplined and coherent unit. The Army was fortunate to have a Commander of the calibre of General Alexander in control of such a desperate situation.

The only food was that carried on the men and fresh water was very scarce. Captain Delaval-Cotter volunteered to find some and eventually came to a water point guarded by a military policeman. His complexion had become deeply bronzed by the weather, and the military policeman informed him that only British personnel were permitted to draw water from this source. Delaval-Cotter politely asked the policeman what the hell he thought he was. Whereupon the policeman leapt to attention and said: 'I am terribly sorry, sir, I thought you were a Moroccan soldier.' Cotter returned indignant, but with the much-needed water.

Eye-witnesses in the Regiment were unanimous in asserting that the discipline and morale of the British troops was high. The organisation for control was good. The parties patrolling the beaches marched up and down as if on the barrack square, and gave a feeling of confidence and military good order. Although very weary and exhausted, the men showed no signs of fear or demoralisation, and retained their cheerfulness and sense of humour. 'Butcher' Smith of 'C' Squadron, an inveterate humorist, put up a comic turn on a horse and drew a ready laugh from those around. During the day there was, at times, quite heavy shelling. After a salvo which fell unpleasantly close, Major Cordy-Simpson was heard to shout: 'Come on, you chaps, get up, and clear up all this filthy mess of paper and tins lying about.' It is incidents such as these which show that the well-led soldier will refuse to admit defeat.

General Alexander told Lieutenant-Colonel Stirling that he was to evacuate the Regiment to England and could choose whether to embark off the beach or walk to the Mole at DUNKIRK and embark by ship. The Commanding Officer chose the latter as the drier method.

At 6.15 p.m. orders were issued to march the seven miles to DUNKIRK in groups of fifty. At 9 p.m. the parties arrived at the Mole which was under spasmodic fire and they had to cover the last two hundred yards at the double.

A Cross-Channel steamer was found on the point of casting off and the Regiment was packed on board with their Commanding Officer the last to leave the quay. In the words of Lieutenant-Colonel Stirling:—

‘I remember little of the crossing except a very welcome whisky and soda before dropping to sleep in a luxurious double-berth cabin with Captain Harrap (Adjutant) in the other bed. We were called by a steward in the morning with a cup of tea, who said:—“We are just approaching Dover Harbour, Sir.” I could hardly believe it and it seemed incredible that the nightmare of these last weeks was over. We disembarked at Dover about 9 a.m. and I was very proud to see the Regiment march off the quay as if on parade in their own barracks, every man with his arms.’

Major Welstead has given his account of his experiences on the beaches:—

‘For some hours, as we approached the perimeter during the night, I had been admiring the ruby red sky and black cloud from the fires in DUNKIRK. I was reminded of the battle pictures of the Peninsular War and the burning of Moscow. I thought to myself that things hadn’t changed much in a hundred years. It was impressive and ominous for what might be in store for us on the beaches.

‘We reached the perimeter defences as it was getting light, and made our way along the narrow raised roadway with flood waters on both sides. After a few minutes it

WITH THE B.E.F. IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1940

was impossible to go on. As far as the eye could see the road was blocked by French horse transport. In a number of waggons the horses were still harnessed but the drivers had all fled. I was considering how long it would take to clear the road, as it was impossible to turn round, when Colonel Stirling arrived on foot. He ordered us to retain our light weapons and small packs and to drive the vehicles into the floods, guns and ammunition included. So far as the carriers were concerned this order was soon executed. But it was obvious that, if a tank was driven in, the driver could not get out alive. They were too heavy to push over, so I decided to take the locks out of the guns, throw the ammunition into the water, and smash up the carburettor and electrical parts.

‘Having disposed of our vehicles we formed up and marched towards the beaches. When we approached the houses, we saw a mass of French humanity hurrying in every direction, completely bewildered. It was difficult to maintain our ranks, as the crowd tried to push through from both sides. None had any arms which was lucky perhaps. Converging on us was a formed body of French troops, quite cheerful and unconcerned. It was a squadron of the 1st French Division Légère Mécanique. They were the only French troops I saw under the control of officers.

‘We next met a battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment coming towards us, and going to take up a position on the perimeter. We had met them before, and recognised the Commanding Officer. I distinctly remember the grim look on their faces, and I couldn’t help wondering how many would get back to England.

‘When we arrived at the beach we sat down under the sea wall. The men were soon asleep. Out to sea the sight from this position was impressive. There were some destroyers, two or three Dutch motor vessels of the type trading in our East Coast ports and up the estuaries, with rowing boats and motor yachts ferrying men out to them. I also noticed two sailing yachts taking men aboard.

Quite near was a Dutchman which had come too close inshore, and the ebb had left her aground. About fifty prospective passengers were in the water trying to push her off to the strains of the Volga boatmen.

'We were soon roused and called upon to link Kapok rafts to make a jetty. Cordy-Simpson had been doing this for some hours the previous day, so we now took our turn. Having completed the job, I went back to the wall and found we had acquired a house for a mess, so I had a good meal.

'After lunch I took a motor-cycle to look for food in the various vehicles on the approach to the beach. I returned with a sackful, but saw the Regiment marching in column of squadrons towards DUNKIRK, preceded by a horseman and a cyclist. When I caught them up I saw that the horseman was 'Butcher' Smith. I cannot remember the name of the cyclist, but he rode almost entirely on the back wheel only. We passed down the beach from control to control. During this slow, but organised, progress we watched parties of French and British troops being rowed out to vessels. One or two shells passed over and fell into the sea, whereupon all the Frenchmen fell down like ninepins.

'It was dusk when we reached the docks. They were alight and the cranes appeared damaged and bent. Tracer was passing overhead and the occasional shell. We now came under Naval Control and were given orders that, when we moved again, it was to be at the double to the boat on the left. I passed the order back, and we doubled to the gangway, a distance of about two hundred yards. John Furness and I saw the men aboard and, as I was following, I was held up by an ancient deck hand who told me to leave my dog ashore. No dogs were allowed without a permit. I persuaded him to discuss the question when we got to England under less harassing conditions.

'We all slept well, having spent only a day on the beach and suffered no casualties.'

The story of the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from DUNKIRK and the beaches is told elsewhere, and will live as one of the most remarkable and heroic exploits in the history of the war.

Underestimating the gallant and incredible resourcefulness of the seafaring men of Britain, the enemy believed evacuation by sea to be impossible. They failed to annihilate the British Expeditionary Force, whilst the people of Great Britain held their breath, hardly daring to hope that more than a fraction of the Army could escape.

Field-Marshal Lord Gort, v.c.,¹ in his official despatch, writes:—

‘The troops under my command whatever their category, displayed those virtues of steadiness, patience, courage and endurance for which these Corps and Regiments have long been famous. . . . Time and again the operations proved the vital importance of the good junior leader who has learned to encourage by his example the men whom he leads, and whose first care is the well-being of the troops placed under his command. Firm discipline, physical fitness, efficiency in marching and digging, and skill at arms, old-fashioned virtues though they may be, are as important in modern warfare as ever they were in the past.’

There may be people today who are inclined to scoff at the old regimental traditions of the past. They may think that the old virtues are out of date, and that future wars can be won by atom bombs and the inventions of scientists alone. But, vital as these weapons may be, the qualities and virtues of the men who have to use them, and of the peoples in their homes and workshops behind, are still more vital.

There is no institution better qualified to teach these virtues than the British Regular Regiment.

¹Field-Marshal The Viscount Gort, v.c., G.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.V.O., M.C., Commander-in-Chief of the B.E.F.

Although, only ten months before the outbreak of war, the Regiment had been equipped and armed in a manner obsolete for modern warfare, the old-fashioned virtues—the things that really matter—had been maintained. Discipline and the well-being of the troops, training in leadership and physical fitness had not been neglected. It was this training which enabled the Regiment to make the best use of the new, but still inadequate, equipment with which it began the war. It was to help them again to make full use of the modern equipment¹ which was to come later and carry them to victory.

In spite of the doubts and fears and inevitable confusion of retreat, all ranks fulfilled their allotted tasks and maintained throughout a high standard of morale and discipline in the best traditions of the Regiment.

¹ See Appendices v and vi.

Chapter 4

IN ENGLAND, 1940-1943

THE THREAT OF INVASION - THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN TRAINING AS AN ARMoured REGIMENT

THE Regiment landed at FOLKESTONE on the morning of the 31st of May, 1940, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel D. A. Stirling, and moved immediately by train to WOOTTON-UNDER-EDGE, Gloucestershire.

The Regiment had embarked for France in September, 1939, with more than five hundred officers and other ranks including first reinforcements. When all who returned from the Continent had rejoined, the strength was found to be four hundred and thirty-six all ranks. The Regiment was fortunate to escape with such comparatively light losses.

On the 2nd of June, Her Majesty Queen Mary inspected the Regiment. The men were delighted to see their Colonel-in-Chief and tell of their experiences. Thus came to an end the part played by the Regiment in the first disastrous campaign of the Second World War in France and Belgium, and in the glorious but tragic episode at DUNKIRK.

In the words of Mr. Winston Churchill in the House of Commons on July 14th:—

‘And now it has come to us to stand alone in the breach and face the worst that the tyrant’s might and enmity can do. Bearing ourselves humbly before God, but conscious that we serve an unfolding purpose, we are ready to defend our native land against the invasion by which it is threatened. . . .’

History will show how near England was to invasion during the late summer of 1940 and how unprepared she

was to meet it. Although some 330,000 troops had been miraculously evacuated across the Channel from DUNKIRK, the losses in the fighting had been severe and practically the whole of the Army's equipment and transport had been destroyed, or left in enemy hands. The manpower of the country, both for the fighting services and for the factories, required re-organisation to meet the grave crisis, and equipment of all natures was short or non-existent.

The following German description of the British soldier, found amongst the enemy records after the war, and based on the experience of the battles in France and Belgium at this time, is complimentary and shows that the spirit of the men was sound even in defeat. 'The English soldier was in excellent physical condition. He bore his own wounds with stoical calm. The losses of his own troops he discussed with complete equanimity. He did not complain of hardships. His conviction that England would conquer in the end was unshakeable.'¹

On the 12th of June, the Regiment moved to BOVINGTON to form part of the 1st Armoured Reconnaissance Brigade under Brigadier Charles Norman,² with the rôle of guarding the coast between POOLE HARBOUR and CORFE. Luckily there was no enemy attack as the only weapon available was the rifle, with no more than fifty rounds of ammunition per man.

Towards the end of June the troops were equipped with 'Standard' motor cars which had a little armour round the front and sides, but no roof. Each car carried a Bren gun or Boys rifle. On the 31st of June the Regiment was made up to a strength of seventy-two of these vehicles and ordered to GOSFIELD PARK in Essex, where it came under command of 12 Corps as Mobile Reserve for the Eastern Counties. On arrival, two lorries manned by personnel of the Royal Navy were attached, one mounting a six-pounder and the other a two-pounder anti-tank gun.

¹ *'Defeat in the West'* by Milton Shulman.

² Later Major-General C. W. Norman, C.B.E.

On the 30th of July, His Majesty The King paid a visit to the Regiment which did much to encourage all ranks.

The Battle of Britain found the Regiment in the EPPING area, with 'A' and 'C' Squadrons in THEYDON BOIS; 'B' Squadron at THORNWOOD CAMP, near NORTH WEALD airfield; and R.H.Q. and H.Q. Squadron in EPPING.

In this great fight in the air over England, which lasted from the 10th of July until nearly the end of October, the Royal Air Force won undying fame. The heroic repulse of the Luftwaffe gave rise to the famous remark of the Prime Minister—'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.'

The Regiment suffered no casualties, but had some narrow escapes. A truck carrying a guard to its post was blown off the road when passing a hospital, which was bombed and completely destroyed. 'C' Squadron was continuously engaged in putting out incendiaries, dropped in a series of vicious attacks on EPPING FOREST. Any light showing after dark was liable to bring down a bomb and R.H.Q. had a lively time when the house next door to the billet occupied by the Regimental Despatch Riders was hit. On another occasion a Messerschmidt 109 was shot down just over the fence from 'B' Squadron camp. The German pilot was captured by a local unit of the Royal Air Force and the plane was recovered almost intact.

Troops were sent on reconnaissances into the London Docks so that officers and non-commissioned officers would know their way about in the event of having to operate in that area, but the occasion for their use in this rôle never arose.

Such were the minor, but exciting, experiences of the Regiment on land whilst the handful of Royal Air Force pilots fought overhead with unmatched gallantry against overwhelming odds, and the fate of the country hung in the balance. It is now known from German sources that by October Hitler had decided to abandon the intention

to invade England. But the threat remained which made all possible precautions necessary for some time to come.

On the 1st of November the Regiment again moved, this time to the TOWCESTER area—'A' Squadron to PATTISHALL, 'B' Squadron to LICHBOUGH, 'C' Squadron to TOWCESTER, and R.H.Q. and Headquarter Squadron to CORNHILL. Here the 1st Armoured Reconnaissance Brigade was reconstituted as the 27th Armoured Brigade of the newly formed 9th Armoured Division (Major-General M. Brocas Burrows).

There is little of interest to record in the time spent by the Regiment in their Midland billets, during the winter and summer of 1940/41. It was the beginning of a long, hard period of ceaseless training, which did not come to an end till the Regiment embarked for the assault on the beaches of Normandy over three and a half years later.

It was only natural that the Regiment's hopes should, at first, be fixed on an early return to active service, and there were many moments of bitter disappointment as the weeks and months went by. The delays in the provision of equipment of all natures, and the constant changes in organization which befell all units and formations in the Army in England, at this time, were difficult to bear with patience. But overwhelming problems faced the Higher Command at this stage of the war, and it was not easy for the rank and file of the Regiment to understand the unavoidable delays, frustrations and changes in organization which fell to its lot.

On the 8th of January, 1941, the death occurred of General Lord Baden-Powell, who died at PAXTER-NYERI in East Africa at the age of 84. He joined the 13th Hussars in 1876 and won a world-wide reputation as a great Cavalryman and Chief of the Scout Movement, which he founded. He was always a loyal and devoted 13th Hussar, and was Colonel of the Regiment from 1911 to 1938. A Memorial Service was held in Westminster Abbey which

was attended by the Commanding Officer, Regimental-Serjeant-Major and Squadron representatives. His name will live in the history of the Regiment as an example to all of devotion to duty, love of adventure, and the true cavalry spirit.

On the 14th of August, 1941, Lieutenant-Colonel D. A. Stirling went to the Middle East, and was succeeded by Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Moulton-Barrett, who was brought in to command the Regiment from the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards. Lieutenant-Colonel Stirling had commanded the Regiment with distinction during the period of mobilization at SHORNCLIFFE and subsequently throughout the campaign in France, Belgium and at DUNKIRK. He was promoted to command an armoured brigade in the Middle East but was unfortunately captured by the Germans at SIDI REZEGH in 1941 when temporarily acting as second-in-command of the 4th Armoured Brigade in the Western Desert. After spending some three years as a prisoner of war in Italy, he succeeded, after many adventures, in escaping through enemy lines into British hands.

Lieutenant-Colonel Moulton-Barrett took over command when the Regiment had just moved from the TOWCESTER area into camp near THETFORD, Suffolk, which afforded an excellent area for training. At this time the Regiment had been re-equipped with the Covenanter tank, and a very bad tank it was thought to be. It was unreliable mechanically, lightly armoured, and carried a 2-pounder gun. The Regiment had only been equipped with these tanks for a short time, and had never had an opportunity of proper individual training, before being called upon to start field training. It was, in fact, being forced to run before it had learnt to walk.

After less than three weeks at THETFORD, where much hard work was done at troop and squadron training, the Regiment moved to STAMFORD, where it was given an operational rôle in the defence of WEST WITTERING air-field. The tanks moved by train and the wheeled vehicles

by road. This gave experience in the entraining of tanks and provided an exercise in march discipline for the crews of all vehicles.

The new area was a poor one for training. But, on the 14th of September, another move was made to THORESBY CAMP, a distance of about fifty miles. The whole Regiment moved by road, a tactical exercise and harbour scheme being carried out en-route.

On the 25th of September the Regiment set off for its concentration area in the THETFORD neighbourhood for the big G.H.Q. exercise 'BUMPER'. This exercise lasted for five days and imposed considerable strain on both men and machines. Very few tanks were still running at the end of it. Wireless communications did not work well, and the Regiment got out of hand very easily as a result of poor control. But many valuable lessons were learnt and it emphasized strongly the lack of individual training. On conclusion, the Regiment returned to its billets round TOWCESTER.

A few days later, on October 12th, the Regiment moved again to the concentration area for the Northern Command exercise 'PERCY', which was held close to NEWCASTLE. The crews of wheeled vehicles had some good training in march discipline and the tank crews had some experience in entrainment, as did the Commanding Officer himself. Whilst guiding a tank on to the train he gave a wrong signal, with the result that the tank fell on to the line and blocked it for several hours. Apart from that, little was learnt from this particular exercise. This was the final large scale exercise of the year, and the Regiment, at last, had an opportunity to concentrate on individual training in driving, maintenance, and wireless control, which were the most urgent needs. Much hard work on these subjects was done throughout the winter, and the results were startling when field training began again in the following spring. The way in which tanks were kept running, in spite of difficulties, was most

gratifying, and all ranks felt that there was really something to show for their labours.

On the 16th of February, 1942, 'A' Squadron went off to BRANDON, where they had a good area for troop training. On the 8th of March, 'B' and 'C' Squadrons went to OGBOURNE ST. GEORGE, near MARLBOROUGH, for the same purpose. Here Lieutenant and Quartermaster H. Burder left the Regiment, being succeeded by Regimental - Quartermaster - Serjeant F. Sweeting. Lieutenant Burder had served the Regiment both as Regimental-Serjeant-Major and Quartermaster. He was a soldier of outstanding personality who succeeded in winning the confidence of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men alike. He knew how to weld a team together and instil discipline by leadership, example and efficiency.

The whole Regiment concentrated at the beginning of April, and some extremely valuable troop and squadron training was carried out, including field firing in co-operation with artillery and infantry. On the 25th of April, 1942, the Regiment was honoured, and greatly encouraged, by a visit from Her Majesty Queen Mary, who inspected the men and their vehicles, watched an exercise, and later had tea in the officers' mess. A number of Old Comrades were present for the inspection.

The next move was not until the beginning of May, and, by that time, the Regiment felt that training was nearing a fairly good standard. Morale was high, and everyone was full of enthusiasm. Unfortunately, this optimistic frame of mind was not to last. On the 26th of March the Regiment had been put on a non-mobilised basis. This meant that they were on a low priority for stores and equipment, were liable to provide drafts for other regiments overseas, or of a higher priority, and were not likely to take part in active operations for some time.

Up to the end of April of that year the full repercussions

of this had not been fully realised. The Regiment had been fortunate in retaining their own men and considerable progress in training had been made. Hopes still ran high of early orders for active service in the Middle East, where the Italians had already been decisively defeated, and British and Dominion forces, though small and comparatively ill-equipped, were at grips with Rommel's Panzer Corps along the GAZALA line in the Western Desert. But just before moving to CHIPPENHAM CAMP, NEWMARKET, on the 5th of May, orders were received to send off the first two drafts of sixty men for service overseas. This was the beginning of many such orders posting both officers and men into the Regiment and out again, and this situation did not become stable for almost another eighteen months.

It was a period of frustration and disappointment, and imposed upon the Regiment a more severe test of good leadership, discipline and morale than is given in the field of battle, where objectives are clear-cut and opportunities of winning distinction are afforded. But officers and men of the Regiment cheerfully settled down to hard training, and refused to allow any difficulties to damp their keenness and enthusiasm. They may well look back upon the long weary months of training in England with pride and satisfaction.

It is in the ranks of the regiments of the British Army, with their long, proud traditions in the service of the Empire, that the citizen soldier can best learn the true meaning of discipline and good teamwork. Here he finds the comradeship which enables him cheerfully to endure the hardships of battle and the monotony of training, and develops the determination never to let his regiment or comrades down.

*

*

*

It was in April, 1942, that the death occurred of Colonel J. J. Richardson, Colonel of the Regiment since 1938. He was succeeded by Brigadier J. N. Lumley.

The remainder of the summer of 1942 was spent mainly in field training, including many brigade, divisional and G.H.Q. exercises, making use of the good THETFORD training areas. Much was learnt from these exercises and valuable experience was gained.

In the early part of June the Regiment paid a ten-day visit to LINNEY HEAD, South Wales, for tank shooting.

On the 8th of September the Regiment left the 9th Armoured Division and moved to SKIPTON, Yorkshire, where they came under command of the 79th Armoured Division (Major-General P. Hobart¹). They still formed one of the regiments of the 27th Armoured Brigade (Brigadier G. J. de W. Mullens) with the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards and the East Riding Yeomanry.

The winter of 1942/43 was spent working at very high pressure in individual training, and, so far as the officers were concerned, in various tactical and administrative exercises. Few who took part in this high pressure training will forget the life of charts and coloured chalks, of classrooms and blackboards, instructors and syllabi. Each squadron-leader was in charge of a school, and there was not a man in the Regiment who was not involved to some extent. No one will deny, however, that all this paid a dividend and, by the spring of 1943, the number of qualified tradesmen was very creditable. Hardly a man could plead ignorance of tank maintenance, gunnery or the intricacies of wireless operating.

At this time Major R. T. G. Harrap was second-in-command to Lieutenant-Colonel Moulton-Barrett. Captain J. A. S. Neave was Adjutant, having succeeded Captain J. A. Stancomb in 1942. The Squadron-Leaders were: Major D. B. Wormald, 'A'; Major A. A. K. Rugge-Price, 'B'; Major Sir Delaval Cotter, 'C'; Major J. R. Cordy-Simpson, H.Q.; Captain F. Sweeting was Quartermaster; Captain A. W. P. Lyon-Clark, Technical Adjutant; and Mr. A. L. Hind was Regimental-Serjeant-Major. There

¹ Later Major-General Sir Percy Hobart, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

were no changes among Squadron-Leaders until well after D-day in 1944.

Major W. F. Butler, who had been in command of 'A' Squadron before Major Wormald took over, left the Regiment early in November, 1942, for the Western Desert, where he saw active service. He was killed in action in 1943 at BOU ARADA in Tunisia while second-in-command of the Lothian and Border Horse. 'Boy' Butler had proved himself a gallant soldier and first-class leader. He was a very good horseman and had captained the Regimental polo team in India and in the finals of the Inter-Regimental at MEERUT in 1938 when defeated by the 10th Royal Hussars.

During this period a few Crusader tanks were issued, which were thought to be a considerable improvement on the Covenanter. The Regiment also had its first experience of the six-pounder gun, which was a great advance on the old two-pounder. Two visits were paid to MIDHOPE Ranges for tank shooting, and good value was obtained from them. Meanwhile the drafting of Officers and other ranks continued, and, in February and March, there was an intake of about one hundred and fifty.

Reward came at last, early in April, 1943, when information was received of the rôle the Regiment was destined to play on D-day, in the assault on Europe. The Regiment had been selected for a special task of a highly secret nature, and was to undergo training in the use of the D.D.¹ amphibious tank. This news had a most exhilarating effect on all ranks. They were again on the priority list for stores and equipment, drafting was to come to an end, and everyone felt that there was, at last, a definite object in view. The Regiment once again could be knit together as a fighting unit.

¹ The Code abbreviation for 'Duplex Drive', so called because both propellers and tracks were driven while the Tank was swimming.

Chapter 5

TRAINING AS A D.D. REGIMENT, 1943-1944

FIRST LESSONS IN THE D.D. TANK - WICKHAM MARKET
GOSPORT - FORT GEORGE - FINAL PREPARATIONS
MARSHALLING AND EMBARKATION

WHEN the Regiment began to train as a D.D. Regiment for the assault on Europe, the war had been going on for over three and a half years. Since DUNKIRK, British and Dominion Forces had mainly been engaged in fighting in the Middle East. Many regiments of the Royal Armoured Corps had seen active service in the Western Desert, Greece, Syria, Irak and Persia, and had experienced both victory and defeat.

On the 23rd of October, 1942, the Eighth Army, under the command of General Montgomery, won the decisive victory at EL ALAMEIN which finally brought an end to German and Italian aspirations of conquest in the Middle East. The 7th of November, 1942, saw the invasion of North Africa successfully launched by British and United States Forces under General Eisenhower.¹ The beginning of May, 1943, found the Allied Armies, under General Alexander, ready for the attack on the Axis Armies in Tunisia, which brought about unconditional surrender on the 12th of May, and finally swept the enemy out of Africa.

STALINGRAD had fallen to the Russians on the 31st of January; the German offensive had been halted in Russia and the Caucasus; preparations were proceeding for the counter-offensive against the Japanese in Burma and the Far East; the Allied navies and aircraft had brought the submarine menace under control; British and American

¹ Later Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

Air Forces were in a position to ensure air superiority over the decisive fronts; and the destruction of enemy sources of production and lines of communication in Germany by Bomber Command and the 8th United States Army Air Force was steadily growing heavier and more devastating. The tide had definitely turned, and it was possible for the Higher Command to go forward with plans for the opening of the second front and the final assault on Europe across the Channel.

Meanwhile the equipment and training of the Royal Armoured Corps had been steadily improving. Great experience had been gained in the battles of the Western Desert and in North Africa, and the lessons learnt had been quickly applied to the training of armoured regiments at home. Tank equipment, which had been in such dangerously short supply and so disastrously inferior to that of the enemy in the early years of the war, was now catching up. The General Sherman tank was arriving from America in great quantity, and already formed the main equipment of the Royal Armoured Corps. The 6-pounder gun, which had replaced the 2-pounder, was now in its turn rapidly being replaced by the 75 mm. and the 17-pounder gun as the primary tank armament. The range and hitting power of the projectile was also growing greater and more formidable.

It was, therefore, in a spirit of unbounded optimism that the Regiment began to train in its special rôle, and all ranks entered upon their new task with the feeling that they had been given a unique part to play in the making of the history of warfare.

In August, 1942, a reconnaissance in force had been carried out at DIEPPE. Two of the main objects of the operation were: firstly, to test the coastal defences of north-west Europe, and, secondly, to try out the technique for the landing of an assault force over open beaches held by the enemy. These objects were successfully achieved, but the raid proved terribly costly in human life. Out of about

5,000 soldiers who took part, 3,350 became casualties.

It was clear that there was much to be learned about the assault technique. In this operation the infantry were the first to land and establish a bridgehead, followed by the tanks and other supporting arms. If the tanks were brought ashore first in L.Cs.T.¹ they would be destroyed piecemeal as they left the craft. It was realised that no concentration of gun fire and air bombardment would be sufficient to ensure that all the enemy-prepared defences would be knocked out. Some new technique was called for, something which would neutralize enemy fire from concrete defences during the critical period when the assault was actually being launched, and when the support fire had to be lifted inland or to a flank, due to the approach of the assault wave of infantry. After many trials, the D.D. or amphibious tank was eventually evolved and accepted as the best available device which could carry out this task.

D.D. tanks were of novel and 'top secret' design, and in them the Regiment was to swim ashore and lead the forthcoming assault against the Continent. It was made clear that the Regiment would have to go through an intensive and arduous training for an operation in which the amphibious rôle would last a very short time. In tactics the Regiment was to be trained in tank work in close co-operation with infantry.

Speculation amongst the rank and file was rife. Surprise was a vital factor and the project was to be kept a complete secret. A grave responsibility, therefore, rested upon all ranks of the Regiment to avoid any talk as to the nature of the activities in which they were engaged. Security precautions were carefully and methodically organized, and at this stage it was only the senior officers who knew more than that—as the Divisional Commander put it—'the Regiment was to be put ashore in an entirely novel manner.'

¹ Landing Crafts Tank.

Everyone had to sign the Official Secrets Act, and lectures were given to the men at frequent intervals. Needless to say they reacted extremely well, and it is to their great credit that no trouble was at any time experienced on the security issue.

The facts of Duplex Drive were not, at that time, revealed, and, had they been, it is doubtful whether they would have been believed. A canvas screen raised vertically and surrounding the tank does not sound very convincing as a means of flotation. But such it proved to be.

To start with, the D.D. tank was to be the Valentine, but, if production allowed, the battle model was to be the Sherman.¹ Whether or not this would in fact be

¹The Sherman D.D. Tank was an ordinary Sherman to which flotation gear and propellers were attached. The flotation gear consisted of a thick canvas screen and a number of rubber pillars about the size of an ordinary motor tyre inner tube. The canvas screen was raised by inflating the rubber pillars from two bottles of compressed air, which were strapped to the hull of the tank. The screen was then held in position by elbow-jointed struts which had to be fixed and adjusted by the crew.

When the screen was thus raised and held in position the tank floated. When floating the top of the turret was about level with the surface of the water, having about three feet of canvas freeboard (see illustrations facing pages 72 and 96).

The tank was driven through the water by two propellers, which were attached to the back of the hull, below the deck, and driven through a bevel box off the tracks.

Steering was obtained by turning the propellers (outboard principle). The tank was normally steered with a tiller by the crew commander, who stood on a platform behind the cupola. The tank could also be steered by the driver by means of a hydraulic steering lever and a form of periscope. The steering was not easy and required considerable practice.

As the tracks were going round driving the propellers it followed that as soon as the tank touched ground (Touch-down, as it was called) the tank moved forward in the normal way.

When in about five feet of water the Commander would get into his turret and hand over steering to the driver. The driver would be ordered to break struts, which was done by hydraulically operated plungers. These broke the elbow-joints and the air was then released from the pillars by means of valves. The screen then fell to the deck and the tank became an almost normal land tank.

(Continued on next page)

produced in sufficient numbers for the Regiment to use it on 'D-day'¹ remained uncertain for several months to come. It would also be necessary to undergo training in the Davis Submerged Escape Apparatus (D.S.E.A.) to give crews a good chance of survival should tanks sink.

The Regiment had had no previous experience of the Valentine tank, so the first training was to master its mechanism and maintenance. With this object in view, the Regiment received the first batch of eleven Valentines on the 10th of April, 1943, and immediately started to learn all about them. These were ordinary land tanks and had not been fitted with D.D. equipment.

Early in April most of the officers were sent off on a special tank/infantry co-operation course at BARNARD CASTLE. This proved exceedingly valuable and many new lessons were learnt.

At the end of April, the Regiment moved to WICKHAM MARKET, in Suffolk, so as to be conveniently situated for swimming in FRITTON LAKE. The special training was to be carried out under the supervision of the 79th Armoured Division, but in all other respects the Regiment remained under the 27th Armoured Brigade, now an independent Brigade with the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards and East Riding Yeomanry, under Brigadier G. E. Prior-Palmer, who had arrived from the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.

In May,⁴³ the Regiment received the first batch of Sherman tanks and came on to a new establishment. This involved an increase in strength, and a draft of about one hundred and fifty was received shortly after from the

¹ Code name given to the unknown day on which the Continent would be invaded.

(Continued from previous page)

The three major dangers to the Sherman D.D. Tank were:—first, that the canvas screen could easily become torn, which might cause the tank to sink immediately; second, that, whilst afloat, the normal tank armaments could not be fired; and, third, that the commander had normally to remain standing on his platform in a rather exposed position until the tank had firmly touched-down.

104th Regiment Royal Armoured Corps. The Sherman was a new proposition for the Regiment, and a pleasant change from any tank with which they had been previously equipped. It was bigger and mounted the 75 mm. gun. It had more armour, a five-man crew, but above all, was mechanically reliable, and this was felt to be its greatest asset. The Regiment at once started conversion courses, and, by June, was ready for collective training.

The areas were excellent, and at ORFORD NESS there was a large scale battle practice range. Training followed conventional lines. Squadron followed troop training, till the Regiment was ready for exercise 'THET', which was due to take place at the end of July. This exercise was on a brigade level and lasted about a week. It was the first time since re-organization that the Regiment turned out complete, with their new tanks and all échelons on full establishment.

The exercise opened with a review on HOLLESLEY HEATH, just outside WOODBRIDGE. The entire Brigade was drawn up in open order, with tanks in front, 'B' vehicles¹ behind, and, on the flanks, the various services, including the Field Ambulance, R.E.M.E. Workshops, and R.A.S.C. Company. After the review, the Brigade moved off to the NEWMARKET area some fifty miles away, where for the whole seven days they were kept hard at work. The exercise finished with a set piece attack on FROG HILL, a well-known feature of the THETFORD area. As a result of this training, the Regiment gained the greatest confidence in their new tanks, which had behaved admirably.

On the 20th of August, the Regiment moved to LINNEY HEAD for annual firing practice in South Wales. Good weather prevailed throughout, and an immense amount of good training was accomplished, only marred by an unfortunate accident in which Lieutenant Harding was killed. When returning to camp from PEMBROKE

¹ Supply and Transport Vehicles as opposed to 'Fighting' Vehicles.

Station, his tank skidded off the road descending a steep hill, and overturned. Lieutenant Harding was in the turret and was killed instantaneously. He was buried in the PEMBROKE Dock Military Cemetery two days later.

In preparation for their D.D. rôle, a special and amusing firing practice on the beach was carried out, each squadron in turn lining the high water line and pumping their entire load of ammunition into the cliffs. This gave everyone a most spectacular demonstration of fire power, and proved very encouraging for D-day.

It was decided that the return from LINNEY HEAD should be organized and controlled by the Warrant Officers and non-commissioned officers and that no Officer should take part. Mr. Hind, the Regimental Serjeant-Major, was appointed Commanding Officer, and Orderly-room-Serjeant-Major Quick, Adjutant, whilst the Officers took themselves to LONDON for forty-eight hours' leave. This latter excursion was lightly given the name 'Exercise ENIGMA,' and was officially tempered by a visit to the Department of Tank Design at EGHAM. The move of the Regiment was, meanwhile, carried out without a hitch under the Regimental-Serjeant-Major's efficient direction.

At WICKHAM MARKET, where the Regiment was under canvas, there was little for the men to do in their leisure moments. They would go to WOODBRIDGE and sometimes to IPSWICH, but neither place could really offer what they liked in the way of entertainment. However, dances and a few shows were organized in the village, and, as the men were kept busy, time did not weigh heavily on their hands.

Officers were able to get some good shooting in the training area at ORFORD NESS, which was well stocked with a great variety of game. Otherwise there were visits to the Felix Hotel at FELIXSTOWE, which, in spite of war conditions, was very good and afforded a pleasant change from camp life.

FRITTON, where the Regiment went on the 1st of

November to undergo the first stage in D.D. training in fresh water, is a large inland lake surrounded by woods, originally a duck decoy. It was overlooked on one side by private houses and, owing to the very secret activities in which the troops were engaged, the unfortunate owners were subjected to considerable curtailment of their liberties.

The school of D.D. training was run by a Canadian staff under the 79th Armoured Division. The actual training involved meticulous and detailed instruction in preparation, handling and navigation, both by day and by night. The key-note was safety first, since the Valentine tank, which was still being used for this particular training, was at this time considered to be very unsafe afloat. Any neglect or omissions in carrying out the simple drills might sink the ship with every possibility of loss of life.

Nautical jargon quickly sprang up in conversation, and such expressions as 'Port your helm' and 'Coming alongside' soon came naturally to everybody.

The whole Regiment was involved in this training, which was carried out in two parts, 'A' and 'B' Squadrons first for a fortnight, followed by 'C' and H.Q. Squadrons. The Regiment was comfortably billeted in GREAT YARMOUTH and, on the whole, the training went well. There were no fatal accidents, and nothing occurred to upset confidence, although the Valentine tank was only an experimental D.D. model and had many imperfections.

One incident will not easily be forgotten. It occurred during a night exercise which the Brigadier attended. He selected a particular tank of the Regiment from which to watch proceedings. It had been stressed clearly and often during training that it was very important that fuel tanks be kept filled. It was, therefore, somewhat unlucky that the Brigadier should have chosen to travel in a Valentine which suddenly came to a gentle standstill in the middle of the lake with an empty petrol tank. The atmosphere was somewhat unnerving at the best of times

in the blackout, with nothing but a tiny pilot light and a craft whose response to the helm was rather unpredictable. The chances of collision were odds on, and would almost certainly have resulted in the sinking of both craft. With no engine, the tank was quite incapable of movement of any sort. Thus the scene in the tank, and the feelings of the unfortunate subaltern in command, can be imagined. To make matters worse, the motor rescue launch failed to start, and the Brigadier finally had to be taken off in a rowing boat, manned by four soldiers, none of whom had ever handled an oar before.

The future prospects of this officer did not look too good, but the Brigadier knew that even the best young officers made mistakes sometimes, and all was forgiven, though not before he had expressed his views on the oversight in no unmeasured terms.

It may seem unnecessary to instruct intelligent persons that a mechanized vehicle will not move without fuel. But it is a fact which cannot be overlooked in mechanized warfare, without courting disaster. In the past, chances might be taken with the punctilious supply of forage for the horse, but the motor vehicle can find nothing to keep it going from the fields or by the roadside, and will not go one yard if deprived, for a moment, of its vital ration. Strategy, tactics, and the whole technique of supply and maintenance in the field of a mechanized army must, therefore, be regulated by this factor, and careful training of the fighting man in elementary lessons of this nature is essential. By good fortune, no harm was done on this occasion, but, on the contrary, a very valuable lesson was brought home with force—a lesson better learned sooner than later.

A very important part of the training carried out at FRITTON was in the use of the Davis Submerged Escape Apparatus. It was an alarming piece of apparatus, and few relished the idea of this training. But, by easy stages, everyone was eventually brought to the frightening finale,

which, once successfully accomplished, was found to be quite an exhilarating experience.

A sawn-off tank, complete with turret and driver's compartment, was placed at the bottom of a thirty-foot well. Into it was put a full crew dressed in overalls with the 'D.S.E.A.' adjusted at the ready. Hatches were shut down, and, at a given signal, water, at the rate of three thousand gallons a minute, was poured on top of the crew in the tank until the well was full. The apparatus had to be finally fitted, the hatches opened, and then, using all their gadgets correctly, the crew had to 'surface' at the top of the well.

On return to WICKHAM MARKET on the 14th of November⁴³, the Regiment started to take part in a series of exercises known as 'HEDGEHOG'. These were set-piece attacks against a dummy 'West Wall', and all arms took part. The infantry came from the 158th Brigade of the 3rd Division, with which the Regiment were to become well acquainted later on. Every sort of specialized armour was represented. Armoured Vehicles Royal Engineers (A.Vs.R.E.), flails (anti-mine device), 'Crocodiles' (flame throwers mounted on Churchill tanks), and all manner of other inventions.

Before setting off for GOSPORT, to do D.D. training in the sea, the Regiment carried out one more tactical exercise known as 'ALDE', on the 12th of December. At this time, a change in the tactical set up of the Regiment was made. Instead of all three squadrons being amphibious, only two were required in this rôle. The third, with R.H.Q., was to land after and be trained in wading in six foot of water from L.Cs.T. Thus it was that 'A' and 'B' Squadrons and R.H.Q. proceeded to GOSPORT on the 18th of December, whilst 'C' and H.Q. Squadrons went to HODDOM CASTLE in Dumfries-shire.

The training at GOSPORT was hard work, and gave little or no break for Christmas. Work went on at all hours of the day and night in order to catch the tide suitably.

Twice in each twenty-four hour period the tanks would go out in L.Cs.T., which would embark them at STOKES BAY, cross the SOLENT and launch them into OSBORNE BAY, Isle of Wight. This form of D.D. training was very different from anything experienced up to date. Although lucky with the weather, it soon became apparent that the tides and currents were very important factors in the way tanks handled at sea. These exercises were largely experimental, and were watched by both British and American Naval and Military officers, who were concerned in the planning of the assault. Captain Neave (Adjutant) recounts:—

‘I can remember one bleak morning at dawn in a launch with General Omar Bradley¹ (U.S.) and Vice-Admiral Sir Philip Vian.² Neither had had any breakfast, and the exercise was not going too well. Major-General Hobart was also there, and the air was pretty tense and filled with acrimonious comment. But I kept in the background hoping that nothing serious would happen and trusting that we were not really so bad as we seemed to be on this occasion.’

This training was excellent, and, although at this time it was still tied down to the dogmatic teaching of the school, the Regiment was gaining the experience which was to enable it to develop its own ideas on arriving at FORT GEORGE on the MORAY FIRTH.

On the 1st of January, 1944, the whole Regiment concentrated at HODDOM CASTLE where orders were received to mobilise. This involved little more than submitting indents and receiving many new vehicles and stores of every sort. During the stay at HODDOM courses in semaphore were given, while the officers discovered that a castle is not the cosiest of places to live in in mid-winter.

¹ Commander of the U.S. Forces in North-West Europe, 1944-45.

² Vice-Admiral Sir Philip Vian, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., who commanded the Naval Forces at the Assault on Normandy.

On the 20th of January, the Regiment moved to FORT GEORGE. This was the peace-time depot of the Seaforth Highlanders, and, although greatly overcrowded, was an excellent barracks. It was well heated, a valuable and much appreciated asset considering the time of year and the geographical position. The tank park, however, where much time had to be spent, was situated to the north-east on the 'hards',¹ and got the full blast of every wind straight from the Arctic circle.

The set-up for the organization of combined training and rehearsals was on a large scale. The Regiment was under command of the 3rd Division (Major-General T. Rennie²), and was to remain so for the assault on Normandy. The remainder of the troops in this Division were all located in the INVERNESS area. In addition to the three infantry brigades, there were innumerable sappers, gunners, commandos, and various specialised units, all of which were involved in some particular aspect of the assault. The Royal Navy also had a force, equivalent in size and diversity, known as Force 'S'. which was distributed all round the MORAY FIRTH and at INVERGORDON, and was destined to transport the Regiment across the Channel and put them on the beaches.

Army and Navy Headquarters lived side by side in Cameron Barracks, INVERNESS, and prepared and executed a number of exercises-cum-rehearsals which gave the Regiment a very fair idea of what they were in for. 'SMASH', 'GRAB', 'CROWN', 'ANCHOR', 'CUPID', 'PHILCO', 'LEAP YEAR', were all, more or less, full scale exercises in which the Regiment took part during February and March. All were conducted on much the same lines, and were successively more intense and more complete.

The Brigade exercise 'CUPID', held on the 1st of

¹ A concrete tank park running down on to the beach. L.Cs.T. could sail right up to these 'hards' and load and unload the tanks.

² Later killed in Action in Normandy.

March, resulted in a particularly unfortunate accident. The D.D. tanks were launched in MORAY FIRTH early one morning. The wind was rising at the time, and when the tanks were half-way inshore, a severe snowstorm broke. The sea became very rough and two tanks of 'A' Squadron were swamped and sank. Lieutenant Denny and the crews were picked up, except for Corporal Underhay, who was drowned. This was the first and only fatal casualty suffered by the Regiment during D.D. training.

In all, the Regiment lost five tanks during this period of training, and were remarkably lucky not to have incurred further casualties. These losses were due to three main causes. Firstly, no one really knew the capabilities of the D.D. tank in a rough sea, and it was obvious that the sea might not be as calm as could be wished on D-day—as, indeed, it was not. Experiments, however, had to be carried out to find an answer, and considerable risk had to be incurred in doing so. Secondly, even in a comparatively calm sea in which the tanks could navigate successfully when safely launched, the actual process of launching was dangerous. The tank drove down the launching ramp from the L.C.T. on its tracks and then, when in the water, had to engage its propellers. There was, therefore, a few seconds' delay before the tank started to move in the water and could get clear of the ramp. This was the danger period if the waves were at all large. The tank was liable to be washed back on to the ramp, and tear a hole in the canvas, which might result in the tank sinking in a few seconds. The third cause of loss was the fact that, when once in the water, the tank could not be got out again until it reached land. It was not possible to drive it back into the L.C.T. and, owing to the time taken for the swim in, it was quite possible for changes in the weather to take place between the time of launching and reaching land. This actually happened on several occasions, when sudden squalls blew up and disastrous results were only narrowly averted.

Considering the vast numbers of men, vehicles and craft, the diversity of equipment, the strangeness and novelty of the training, the staff organization and control of these exercises was remarkable. This was all the more so, because, at the time, no one could be said to know his job in the many ways required of him.

In the words of an officer of the Regiment:—

‘We would embark on the hards at FORT GEORGE, usually at night on a rising tide, steam out to sea, and then, if we were lucky and not kept on board for longer, make an assault landing at BURGHEAD BAY the following dawn. Once ashore we would move almost exactly as we should have to do on D-day itself and then motor home to FORT GEORGE. It all sounds so simple now, but, in fact, it was far from being so. The chaos on the beach was, on each occasion, quite unbelievable. This, strangely enough, was an asset, for on the day itself there was much confusion and our experience had taught us that it was the normal thing.

‘We learnt all that we had to know about water-proofing vehicles, cooking ‘compo’¹ rations, and the bedlam of wireless set-up. We learnt the most practical clothes to wear, and what comforts came in really useful. We got to know the infantry with whom we would be fighting and the sailors who would take us in. Finally, we got an insight into the marshalling and loading problems, and the planning and briefing that would be necessary when we got south.’

After each exercise, a big conference would be held at INVERNESS, attended by all officers, and run jointly by the Army and Navy, where all problems and lessons would be thrashed out with little or no respect for personal feelings.

These were gruelling days of trial and error. But they were not without a spice of adventure, though lacking a

¹ Name given to boxes of canned rations, made to suffice for fourteen men for one day, or a tank crew of five for three days.

live enemy and the rewards to be won on the field of battle. The enemies to be overcome were the elements, and human and mechanical shortcomings. Reward would be reaped a hundredfold if D-day could arrive with nothing left to chance, and with all ranks full of confidence in themselves, their comrades, and their equipment.

The assault on Europe across the Channel in which the Regiment was called upon to play a vital part, was the greatest and most complicated operation of war ever undertaken, and, furthermore, one on which might depend the future fate of world civilisation.

This period in the history of the Regiment has been recounted in some detail in order to emphasise the vital importance of training, especially when new, highly specialised, and hitherto untried equipment is to be employed. Battles cannot be won by throwing men and machines haphazard into the fray. Only after much hard thinking, and still harder training, can success be assured.

On the 5th of February, 1944, General Sir Bernard Montgomery,¹ who had come from the Eighth Army in Italy in January, 1944, to take over command of the 21st Army Group, arrived at FORT GEORGE to visit all troops in that neighbourhood who were to take part in the assault. It was a particularly cold day, the parade numbered some 3,000, and the Regiment, which was the senior in the Fort, was made responsible for all arrangements.

It was the invariable practice of General Montgomery to speak personally to all units under his command before a major battle, to explain to them the part they were expected to play, and to instil into them complete confidence in the success of the plan of operations. No one realised better than he that, however good the plans drawn up by commanders and their staffs, the battle must

¹ Later Field-Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, K.G., G.C.B., D.S.O.

be fought and won, in the ultimate, by the men in the ranks from factory to front line and that, without complete confidence and the will to win, the chances of success were but slender. No great commander in history has ever appreciated more clearly the paramount importance of the human element as a war-winning factor.

The Brigadier (Brigadier Prior-Palmer) held his opening planning conference for the actual assault at his Headquarters at Moy Hall, near INVERNESS, in February. This enabled the Regiment to begin to plan in detail their own allotted rôle. At this time the 27th Armoured Brigade consisted, in addition to the Regiment, of the East Riding Yeomanry and the Staffordshire Yeomanry. The latter had seen much fighting in the Middle East and had recently taken the place of the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards. This was in accordance with General Montgomery's policy of leavening the 'novices' with battle-experienced troops.

When the Regiment left FORT GEORGE, on the 16th of April, 1944, it was for the concentration and preliminaries necessary in the south of England for the invasion itself. To start with, the Regiment was located in three different places; 'A' and 'B' Squadrons (the two D.D. Squadrons) were at GOSPORT, but still without their new Sherman D.Ds., owing to delay in production. 'C' Squadron and R.H.Q. were at PETWORTH PARK in Sussex, and the various administration échelons were at ALDERSHOT. This arrangement made administration very difficult but obviously, from the Higher Command level, the problem of accommodation, during the period of concentration of the British and American Forces for the invasion, was exceedingly complicated.

Lieutenant-Colonel Moulton-Barrett was on leave when the Regiment moved. When he returned to PETWORTH, shortly after R.H.Q. had settled in, it was only to say goodbye. He had not been well for some time, and, while he was on leave, his doctor had told him that he must have treatment which might take some time. He was,

therefore, compelled to hand over command to Major Harrap just when he was about to see the Regiment put into practice the training he had so assiduously given it in the previous three years. It was not till the fighting in Normandy had been going on for some time that all ranks realised what they owed to him. It is true to say that the high reputation which the Regiment gained in the early fighting in Normandy, was due, in no small measure, to his training and influence whilst Commanding Officer.

At GOSPORT, 'A' and 'B' Squadrons worked intensively at conversion courses on the Sherman tank, but were still without many of the actual tanks that they would take over the Channel. When these did arrive—and some did not do so until almost the last minute—there were many teething troubles to be overcome. These technical difficulties required continual reference to Headquarters Southern Command and the War Office. But, owing to great congestion on the telephone lines, communication was virtually impossible. The solution was found when Colonel D. Raikes of the Fighting Vehicle Inspectorate, War Office, and Major B. Brown of the Directorate of Tank Design, arrived at GOSPORT to give assistance. Quickly realising the very real troubles with which the squadrons were confronted, Colonel Raikes decided to live with them until D-day, and his authority very soon made itself felt. A word here must also be said for the squadron fitter staffs under Serjeant Causebrook ('A' Squadron) and Serjeant (later Mechanist-Quartermaster-Serjeant) Spencer ('B' Squadron), who worked unceasingly and cheerfully through all hours of the day and night.

Activity at PETWORTH was equally intense with 'water-proofing'¹ vehicles, the storing of innumerable loads of

¹ 'Water-proofing' was the process necessary to enable motor vehicles to wade in water. When 'water-proofed', vehicles could only travel a limited distance so that the 'water-proofing' had to be removed when ashore the other side.

new equipment, and a seemingly endless amount of paper work. Landing and loading tables had to be worked out, planning notes and directives issued, while 'top secret' orders for which special precautions had to be taken poured in. There was also endless coming and going at all hours of staff officers and others from the most obscure units. Had a stranger been present, he would have had no doubt of the meaning of all this feverish activity.

Major-General Charles Miller arrived to visit the Regiment. At this time he was Major-General Administration Southern Command, and was therefore in a position to smooth out some of the administrative difficulties and to explain away others, which were probably more apparent than real.

The Regiment took part in one more final exercise called 'FABIUS' on the 29th of April. This exercise was designed to iron out the difficult problem of marshalling and loading. 'A' and 'B' Squadrons had an easy time, since they were already on the 'hards' at GOSPORT, and only had to load themselves into their L.Cs.T. on the spot. 'C' and R.H.Q. Squadrons, on the other hand, had to move from PETWORTH to marshalling camps near PORTSMOUTH and endure the full inconvenience and trials inherent in the process of marshalling and embarkation.

A marshalling area is defined in military text-books as 'an area normally five to ten miles from the coast to which personnel and vehicles are moved in readiness for embarkation and where units are marshalled into ship and craft loads'. Marshalling is a vastly complicated procedure. The technique had been evolved in the many amphibious operations which had already taken place in the invasions of North Africa, Sicily and Italy.

But the invasion of Northern Europe was on a very much larger and more complicated scale than ever previously undertaken. During the planning stages the invasion operation was known under the pseudonym 'OVERLORD', and Allied Staffs had been working upon

the plans for months beforehand. Chief responsibility for the administrative arrangements necessary for the concentration, marshalling and embarkation of the British and American invasion armies fell upon the Staffs of Southern and Eastern Commands working under Movement Control at the War Office and in conjunction with the American counterpart Staffs which had been set up in England for this purpose. It was not to be wondered at that regiments and other units found the complex procedure exceedingly bewildering and, at times, somewhat trying. But, in the final event, the whole operation of concentration, marshalling and embarkation was carried out without a single serious hitch, and history may well accord it a very high place in the achievements of military organization and administration.

The exercise involved for the Regiment a cruise in the Channel under an immense air umbrella, followed by a landing just west of LITTLEHAMPTON. It finished with a manoeuvre on the South Downs before the Regiment returned, once again, to PETWORTH. It provided a most valuable dress rehearsal for the final day of embarkation.

There was now just a month left before D-day, and the work of final preparation continued with feverish activity interspersed with periods of tedious waiting. On the 22nd of May, the Regiment was inspected by The King, and His Majesty drove in a half-track vehicle down the Brigade drawn up in line. This was followed, shortly after, by a visit by General Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, who made a short and inspiring speech and wished the Regiment good luck in the coming operation. On the 1st of June, the Regiment received orders to move to its marshalling area at WATERLOOVILLE, near PORTSMOUTH, and arrived in perfect weather at its last camp on this side of the Channel.

PORTSMOUTH district was an incredible sight. Along all the roads, and every little suburban street, were tanks and assault vehicles, bulldozers, infantry carriers, and

many other vehicles of every description. Camps had been constructed on both sides of the road, and, every few yards, military signs and notices were displayed. But there was everywhere an air of well-regulated order and control. It was fortunate and a tribute to the magnificent work of the Allied Air Forces that the Luftwaffe paid little attention to those areas at this time of acute congestion. Enemy aircraft only came over in ones and twos at night and dropped an occasional bomb. The damage they did was negligible, and failed completely to interfere with the smooth working of this vast programme.

After two days in the marshalling camps, 'C' Squadron and R.H.Q. moved down to the hards to embark in their L.Cs.T., each craft load being called forward by Movement Control by its serial number. 'A' and 'B' Squadrons had an easier passage, being on their 'hards' at STOKES BAY as already indicated.

By 10 a.m. on the 3rd of June, the whole Regiment¹ was safely embarked. Nothing now remained to be done, except to wait for the order to 'go'. This would be the signal to undo the 'top secret' packages containing operation orders and maps, which would show where the Regiment was going. Briefing had been done with bogus maps and names, which did no more than give accurate details and information as to the lie of the land on the far shore. Only those on the 'X' list² had hitherto been told the real destination.

No sooner had the Regiment got on board than a sharp breeze got up, and it soon looked as if the weather was breaking. This proved to be the case, and, on the morning of the 4th of June, orders were received that the invasion had been postponed for twenty-four hours. This was a momentous decision on the part of the Higher Command,

¹ See Appendix III showing the Regiment in the Order of Battle of 21 Army Group.

² Senior officers specially named by the Higher Command.

but it only meant for the Regiment a longer wait in uncomfortable L.Cs.T., and it was by no means welcome. The soldiers passed the time in mild games of cards, sleeping and eating, but were so overcrowded that there was hardly room to move. There were about eight tanks, several carriers, two jeeps and numerous small vehicles on board each L.C.T., with ten officers and one hundred men. There was consequently very little deck space to go round.

The weather did not appear to get any better, but, about mid-day on the 5th of June, the Admiral's Headquarters ship, H.M.S. 'LARGS', gave the signal that the convoy was to sail, adding 'Good luck and press on'.

PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR presented a wonderful scene, packed with ships and landing craft of every description.

As the L.Cs.T., carrying 'A' and 'B' Squadrons, with their D.D. tanks, moved up to take their place at the head of the convoy, 'C' Squadron and R.H.Q. waved them good luck and fell into station behind them.

By 2 p.m., Force 'S', under command of Rear-Admiral A. G. Talbot, D.S.O., R.N., had passed the boom and was set on its course for the Normandy beaches.

Chapter 6

THE ASSAULT AND THE NORMANDY BRIDGEHEAD

THE CHANNEL CROSSING - THE ASSAULT - ACROSS THE ORNE
FIGHTING FOR CAEN - BACK ACROSS THE ORNE - MONT
PINCON - FALAISE GAP AND BREAK-OUT

EVEN hardened campaigners are not without the feeling of tense excitement, and that curious sensation somewhere in the pit of the stomach, which occurs during the hours before battle. Very few of the Regiment had had previous battle experience, and it would have been surprising if most of them had not felt a little apprehensive, as they ate their 'compo' rations on board their L.Cs.T., and contemplated the unknown shocks and surprises that awaited them.

After leaving PORTSMOUTH, Force 'S' sailed eastwards, close to the English coast, for about eighty miles, before changing course for the Normandy beach. It was not long before the shores of England disappeared in the evening mists. There was no sign of German aircraft.¹ But Spitfires and Mustangs were overhead in large numbers, diving down from time to time and inspiring confidence.

The story of the crossing during the night is told by an officer of 'C' Squadron.

'At about 10 p.m., the last tins of self-heating soup for the day were produced (what a boon they were), and, as we made our beds down on the deck of the L.C.T. in the very small space available between the tanks, we were thankful that so far things had gone according to plan, but were still incredulous at the

¹ The reduction of the German Air Force to a degree necessary to ensure mastery in the air over our seaborne forces in the Channel was an essential preliminary to the Assault.

complete absence of any sort of hindrance on the part of the enemy. Surely something would happen before morning! It was not long, however, with the monotonous vibrating of the craft's engine and the fresh night air, before most of us were asleep, although some were finding the increasingly rough sea uncommonly unpleasant.

'I woke at five-thirty in the morning of the 6th of June after an undisturbed night's rest, which surprised me considerably, this being the great day.

'I was soon on my feet but found it was not so easy to stand. There was a heavy swell running and a strong wind blowing up-Channel.

'Looking round, it appeared that many had been, and still were, suffering from sea-sickness. Fortunately my driver and co-driver were not affected, and it was not long before the kit and bedding were stowed away in the tanks and we were making a small breakfast. We were still far out in the Channel, and everything appeared to be as well ordered as when we had set sail the previous day: it really was extraordinary. The flotillas of L.Cs.T. and other craft were complete and still steaming along, keeping their correct stations. Visibility, however, was not so good. It was misty, with occasional showers which lent a rather chilly and sinister atmosphere.

'At 6.30 a.m. we had finished our frugal breakfast and were just beginning to have a last look over the tank, when we passed those well-known L.Ss.I. (Landing Ships Infantry) H.M.S. BATTLEAXE, H.M.S. BROADSWORD, and H.M.S. CUTLASS, which we had seen many times before. They had stopped now, and the infantry assault troops were being loaded into their assault craft, which were alongside ready to take them to the enemy shore. We had often seen the infantry do this before, but this was to be the last time—this was the real thing. I certainly felt sorry for them. Many looked very sick and knew they would be wet before long. But, as always, they were trying to be cheerful. One could not help wondering how many

would be alive by evening, and how many would see England again. I think at this moment we were all glad to be in a tank. We could at least keep dry, and it gave one a feeling of security as distinct from nakedness, even though, later, we found this feeling to be often a false one.

'Suddenly the mist lifted and we could see many more craft of different types, some stopping, some turning round, and then our flotilla received the signal to turn to port which brought us into line facing the Normandy coast. We were now advancing straight towards our enemy.

'In the tank the last checks were being made, ammunition collected, grenades made readily available; cupolas, periscopes, telescopes, spare parts, all these had been gone over many times before, but a last look round gave confidence that everything was O.K.

'It was now seven o'clock and we realised that 'A' and 'B' Squadrons in their D.D. tanks should be on their way. They were scheduled to be launched from their L.Cs.T. two and a half minutes after six o'clock, but, not being on the regimental wireless net, we did not know whether they were going to swim in this very rough sea. But, soon afterwards, I noticed that one of the L.Cs.T., in which the D.Ds. had been travelling, had turned round and was hanging back. It was empty.'

Here the story must leave 'C' Squadron, as their L.Cs.T. continued steadily towards the beach, and turn to that of 'A' and 'B' Squadrons, who had had an equally uneventful, but uncomfortable and tense voyage.

In spite of the roughness of the sea, it had been decided to launch 'A' and 'B' Squadrons according to plan. They were, in fact, the only D.D. Squadrons on the whole of the front of the Allied assault to be successfully launched and swim ashore according to plan and practically intact.¹

¹ See Appendix IV A.

But, before describing their swim ashore and subsequent actions on the beaches on D-day, it is necessary to give in outline the Regiment's task in the assault and the method by which the D.D.s were to operate.

*

*

*

The rôle of the Regiment was to support the assault of the 8th Infantry Brigade (1st South Lancashire Regiment, 2nd East Yorkshire Regiment, and 1st Suffolk Regiment) of the 3rd Division, on the extreme left of the British Second Army assault front, from OUISTREHAM, at the mouth of the

MAP 3 ORNE, to LUC-SUR-MER.

'A' Squadron (Major Wormald) on the right, and 'B' Squadron (Major Rugge-Price) on the left, with their D.D. tanks, were to lead the assault on 'Queen' Red and White beaches respectively. They were to touch down at H-7½ minutes,¹ and remain in the water and subdue by fire all local opposition not already destroyed by the preliminary naval and air bombardments. Subsequently, they were to support the infantry (1st East Lancashire Regiment and 2nd East Yorkshire Regiment respectively) inland in a normal tank rôle.

They were to be followed at H-5 minutes (i.e. 2½ minutes later) by the Flails and A.Vs.R.E. which would clear the mines on four lanes on each squadron front, by flailing over the beach as far as the sandbanks. The sandbanks would be scaled by a bridge, thence there would be further flailing to the first lateral, which was a road running parallel to the beach, about one hundred yards inland. The A.Vs.R.E. would be followed by the assault infantry at H-hour.

R.H.Q. and 'C' Squadron were due to follow up 'A' and 'B' Squadrons and land from their L.Cs.T. at H+45 minutes near the small seaside resort of LA BRECHE and operate in support of the 1st Suffolk Regiment in the capture of two enemy strong points as their first objectives.

¹'H-hour', the code name given to the Time of the Assault on the beach by the infantry.

The transport échelons of the Regiment were to arrive in two distinct parts. The first, a small party of lorries and light armoured load carriers under Major Cordy-Simpson, was to land on D-day. The second party, under Captain D. G. Hannah, was a large unwieldy échelon consisting of all remaining soft vehicles,¹ which was to land on D + 10-day. This latter party had been divorced from the Regiment for two months before D-day.

* * *

In view of the unique rôle of 'A' and 'B' Squadrons, it is worth while describing in some detail the method by which they were to swim ashore in their tanks in their initial D.D. rôle.

The problem of navigation of the D.D. tank in the dark was one which had given rise to a great deal of argument. Great importance was attached to the question of 'touching down' at exactly the right place on the beach. Should the leading tanks go even a few hundred yards astray, there was a very good chance that follow-up crews might go wrong as well, or else land at a different place from the D.D. tanks.

A compass fitted on a pedestal, two feet above the tank turret, had been tried out but it had proved impossible to box and had been discarded. A 'gyro' was then tried, and fitted between the driver and co-driver in the tank. In smooth water, it was found possible successfully to maintain direction by this instrument, but it was necessary to fix the original direction by compass or other means. Again, in rough water, the 'gyro' was found to swing wildly, and it was impossible to steer accurately by it. It was, therefore, decided that some form of guide craft was necessary, and for this purpose two L.Cs.P.(N) [Landing Crafts Personnel (Navigational)] were allotted, one to each Squadron. These craft were to take up station in front of the Squadron Leader's L.C.T., and then, by shining a light over the stern, lead the squadron in shore

¹ Unarmoured vehicles.

until the beach was plainly visible. Furthermore, a midget submarine was to be located to mark the launching position.

The plan envisaged a launch of the D.Ds. at seven thousand yards from the beach. The 'lowering position' was to be at ten thousand yards; this was the point where the infantry landing ships were to lower their L.Cs.A. (Landing Craft Assault). From here, L.Cs.T., carrying the D.D. tanks, started to form line so that, by the time they had reached the 'launching position' and stopped engines, they were in line abreast. They then dropped anchor. Ten minutes were allowed to get ready for launching the D.Ds. and to lower the ramps. Timing was based on an average tank water speed of one thousand yards in ten minutes. In the event, the roughness of the sea and the current proved this figure too optimistic, and the tanks were fifteen minutes late in 'touching down'.

When in the water, each squadron would move towards the shore in line of craft columns of five tanks, each Squadron led by an L.C.P.(N) as navigator. About one thousand yards off shore, each column would come into line, and, on touching down, would drive to a position where the tank could deflate and come into action.

*

*

*

The wind was blowing force five¹ from the west as the L.Cs.T. carrying 'A' and 'B' Squadrons came into line and dropped anchor five thousand yards from the Normandy beach just after 6.15 a.m. on the 6th of June. At the same time, ships of the Royal Navy and S.Ps. (Self-Propelled)² opened fire. To the accompaniment of a shattering noise, the D.D. tanks rolled down the ramps into the sea.

All L.C.T. loads except two made completely successful launches. The leading tank, on its way out of L.C.T. 467 (Temporary Lieutenant R. J. Corrin, R.N.V.R.), carrying 'B' Squadron Leader and the fourth troop, tore

¹ A wind of 16 to 20 knots. ² Self-propelled guns in Landing Craft.

its canvas and was unable to take the water; this prevented the remaining four tanks from getting off. Major Rugge-Price wished to jettison that tank and launch the remainder, but he was overruled and the craft was beached just behind the A.Vs.R.E.

L.C.T. No. 465 (Temporary Sub-Lieutenant W. M. Wright, R.N.V.R.) launched four tanks successfully, but the fourth tank broke the ramp door which prevented the fifth and last from getting out and it was carried back to England.

Once in the water everything went remarkably well. The squadrons picked up their pilot boats and the columns set off for the beaches in good formation. Everybody had formed a pretty good idea, during the crossing, that the sea was not calm, but, by the time they had been in the water a few minutes, they were left with no doubt whatever that the sea was very rough. The D.D. Shermans stood up to the seas remarkably well, and, after the first few anxious minutes when the crews had had time to realise they were still afloat, it was possible to look round and take notice of what was going on.

It was by this time quite light. The coast line was becoming distinct, and, after about thirty minutes' swim, it was possible to see quite clearly what was happening on the beaches. Shells were bursting amongst the small villas on the sea front. Fighter bombers were racing up and down the beach front, and their bombs could be seen dropping and exploding. The rocket craft opened up on the beach defences with their own peculiar noise, which could be heard above all else. A considerable number of rockets were seen to fall short, and one D.D. narrowly escaped being sunk by two rockets falling just ahead of it.¹

Such was the sea and the tide that progress was much slower than calculated. The result was that the L.Cs.T. carrying the A.Vs.R.E., which were intended to follow

¹ Lieutenant Burgess was hit by a rocket splinter and subsequently died of the wound.

up some minutes behind, were on top of the tanks before they 'touched down'. One was certainly rammed and sank, another is believed to have suffered the same fate, and several more had narrow escapes from destruction. When the D.Ds. 'touched down', they sat 'hull down'¹ in the water shooting with all their weapons at everything which caught the eye.

The 'Flails', followed by the A.Vs.R.E. and covered by the D.Ds., landed and moved up the beach, and, on reaching the sandbanks, exploded the mines. Then the first wave of infantry came ashore.

By this time the enemy had begun to show signs of recovering from the initial shock, and heavy machine gun fire was opened from the concrete emplacements and the houses. But, apart from machine gun and mortar fire, there was not a great deal of opposition, and the infantry were able to reach the sand dunes beyond the beach and get in amongst the defences, showing magnificent courage and dash, though not without suffering considerable casualties.

It is estimated that the tanks knocked out three or four 75 mm. guns, four or five 50 mm., and numerous 20 mm. guns. Aimed fire from the enemy guns actually on the beaches, other than sniping from the houses, is reported to have ceased by H + 20. When the full history of the assault comes to be written, there can be no doubt that the courageous decision of Captain Bush, R.N., Commanding the Naval craft, and Brigadier Prior-Palmer, Commanding the 27th Armoured Brigade, to launch the Regiment to the assault and the gallant swim ashore will be found to have been decisive factors in the success of the assault on this part of the front, and in the saving of many lives.

At this point it may be said that the D.D. rôle of the Regiment came to an end. A particularly hazardous and difficult operation, unique in the history of warfare, had been successfully accomplished. It will hold a proud place in the annals of the Regiment, as an unequalled

¹ i.e. With only the turret above the water line.

example of boldness in planning, thoroughness in training, and gallantry in execution.¹

Considering the roughness of the sea and the formidable nature of the enemy defences, casualties during the swim ashore were remarkably light. Of the forty D.D. tanks which were embarked, thirty-four entered the water. One, commanded by Serjeant Sweetapple ('A' Squadron), failed to engage its propellers on entering the water and was immediately overcome by the waves and sank. But the crew was quickly rescued, thanks to the aircraft dinghy which was carried. A second tank was rammed by an L.C.T. (A.V.R.E.) about eight hundred yards from the shore and was sunk. Captain N. N. M. Denny ('A' Squadron) was thrown into the water and was picked up after swimming for some thirty minutes. But, although the crew was wearing escape apparatus and 'Mae Wests',² they never appeared again. A third tank, under command of Serjeant Rattle ('A' Squadron), was sunk about four hundred yards from the shore. All the crew was saved.

Whether, if the D.Ds. were late, the L.Cs.T. (A.V.R.E.) should go through them and run the risks of ramming and losing the D.D. covering fire immediately on landing, had been a matter for keen discussion beforehand. But, rightly or wrongly, it had finally been decided to accept these risks.

Thirty-one tanks reached the beach,³ but a number of these were subsequently overcome by the breakers and

¹ See Appendices IV A and B which give a summary of the operations of the D.D. tanks in the D-day assault and some personal accounts by officers of the Regiment.

² Inflated rubber tubes worn under the battle-dress blouse.

³ On page 47 of *Normandy to the Baltic*, by Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery it is stated 'about half of the amphibious tanks' of the Regiment were able to reach the beaches abreast of the leading infantry. All the evidence now available confirms that 31 D.D. tanks or nearly 80 per cent. of those embarked by the Regiment did in fact 'touch-down' on the beaches and, of these, the vast majority carried out their task of providing covering fire for the assault infantry of the 3rd Division.

the rapidly rising tide which swamped their engines. These tanks, however, remained in action with flooded turrets, and the crews only baled out when the guns themselves were almost awash. Their crews covered the remaining two or three hundred yards of sea to the beach in their rubber dinghies.

Once on the beach, the tanks dropped their D.D. screens and operated in a normal infantry support rôle.

*

*

*

MAP 3 By 9.30 a.m. the 1st South Lancashire Regiment, supported by 'A' Squadron, had captured HERMANVILLE-SUR-MER, with little opposition. This Squadron then went on to LION-SUR-MER, with 'A' Company South Lancashire Regiment, where they became involved in a mopping up operation for the rest of the day. They had lost a considerable number of tanks on the beaches, and Major Wormald was left with only six under his command.

At 3.45 p.m. the enemy-defended locality known as 'SOLE' fell, with some forty prisoners, to the East Yorkshire Regiment, supported by 'B' Squadron. They then moved on to attack their next objective, 'DAIMLER', a heavy gun emplacement some fifteen hundred yards north of 'SOLE'. This position was strongly held, and it was not until 8 p.m. that its capture could be reported. This was 'B' Squadron's last engagement of D-day.

But it must not be thought that everything happened as smoothly and easily for those involved as might appear from the above brief record of events. When the leading tank of 'B' Squadron (Lieutenant W. G. Denny) first moved up on the beach, the only other tank to be seen was that of Captain R. Neave, Second-in-Command of 'B' Squadron. These joined forces and reached the sand dunes, where they found a formidable tank obstacle. Captain Neave obtained the assistance of a bulldozer and quickly succeeded in getting the tanks over and clear of the beach, which was becoming very unhealthy from gun and mortar fire. As only two tanks were then up—too few

to be of much use in support of the infantry—Captain Neave returned on foot to the beach to try and collect the remainder of the Squadron. He was out of touch with his Squadron-Leader (who, it will be recalled, had failed to launch with the fourth troop), but he found the first troop and Captain W. Wormald in his tank on the beach and quickly guided them inland, where they joined up and all moved forward to the second lateral road to gain touch with their infantry.

Unfortunately, on reaching this road, the 1st Troop turned left and disappeared towards OUISTREHAM, where it became involved with the Commandos under Lord Lovat. All efforts to recall it failed. It eventually reached the bridge over the ORNE and was not rallied till the evening. This left the tanks of Captain Neave, Lieutenant Denny and Captain Wormald alone until the Squadron Leader and the 4th Troop—who had by this time come ashore dryshod from their L.C.T.—succeeded in joining up. The East Yorkshire Regiment were greatly cheered by their arrival, and the attacks on 'SOLE', followed by that on 'DAIMLER', were carried out as already recounted.

The infantry had suffered heavy casualties on the beaches and had had an exhausting time, but, tired as they were, they never gave up trying.

*

*

*

Meanwhile the L.Cs.T. carrying R.H.Q. and 'C' Squadron had brought them to within twenty yards of the beach, and at H + 45 minutes they landed safely according to plan.

It is difficult to paint an accurate picture of the scene on the beach. Everything was very confused, due to the influx of men and vehicles, which increased rapidly while the pace of dispersal was still very slow. There was little opposition in the form of direct fire, except from a few concealed snipers, but shelling and mortar fire from concealed positions was heavy and the sea front displayed an amazing scene of burning craft and 'brewed up'¹ tanks and

¹ The Army's term for a burnt-out tank or vehicle.

vehicles. Some ragged Germans were found trying to surrender, and a number of dead bodies could be seen near the water edge. The wading tanks blew off their water-proofing material and were soon ready for action, but there was very little room to move; the beach was like Piccadilly Circus in the rush hour. The disabled D.D. tanks of 'A' and 'B' Squadrons could be seen still in the water on the beach, as 'C' Squadron, now more or less concentrated, moved slowly towards the exit from the beach. Ten minutes later, the Squadron was clear of the beach and making its way inland to the rendezvous with the Suffolk Regiment, preparatory to the first attack.

The first strong point to be overcome was a concrete defensive position known under the code name of 'MORRIS'. It was well wired and reported to contain machine guns and a couple of anti-tank guns. A plan of attack was quickly made, which Lieutenant Eric Smith describes:—

'The task was much easier than we had anticipated. Two tanks worked through the village, street by street, with the infantry in the approved manner, while two more tanks nosed through the surrounding orchards. We, of course, expected to see something or be fired upon, but, in fact, we had no occasion to fire a shot. Much to our surprise, the Boche and a number of the inhabitants had cleared out. Perhaps they had been alarmed by the landing of the 6th Airborne Division nearby earlier in the morning, and probably did not like their defensive position after tasting the furious onslaught of the initial landing. I can recall two memories of COLLEVILLE. Firstly, the reluctance of my driver and myself to run over a dead German body lying prostrate across the road, and, secondly, the bewildered and haunted expressions of the inhabitants, who must have thought that their houses would be completely destroyed, and probably doubted our ability to remain in Normandy for any length of time.'

The remainder of 'C' Squadron and the Company of the Suffolk Regiment found no difficulty in capturing 'MORRIS' and taking a few prisoners.

The next objective on this part of the front was another strong point known as 'HILLMAN'. This turned out to be a much more formidable proposition to tackle. The plan was similar to the previous one, but there were mines to be dealt with. These and quantities of wire caused considerable trouble and delay.

After reaching the edge of the objective, the infantry made two attempts to clear a gap by hand, covered by fire from the tanks; but the mine lifters were pinned down by heavy machine gun fire and suffered some casualties. It was, consequently, late in the afternoon before tanks and infantry succeeded in breaking through the enemy resistance, when tank commanders had a great time winking Germans out of their trenches by throwing grenades from their turrets, whilst other tanks moved round to the far side at full speed to cut off the retreating enemy.

And so it was that, after a rather sticky afternoon, the two D-day objectives were successfully captured. Shortly afterwards 'C' Squadron was ordered to retire to a small pleasant orchard, where A.I. Echelon was eagerly waiting to replenish ammunition and petrol as quickly as possible.

During this interlude a very inspiring sight was witnessed, when supplies and ammunition were dropped from Dakotas to the 6th Airborne Division on the east side of the ORNE. These came down in coloured parachutes which filled the sky, and the careful and orderly way in which the operation was carried out reassured everyone.

The countryside was very pleasant; the evening was fine and sunny, and there was little shelling going on. Looking across the green fields dotted with flowers, and the trees in blossom, it was hard to believe that war was raging.

At seven-thirty in the evening, the Squadron was turned

out to take up turret-down positions behind a ridge to the west of 'HILLMAN' and observe and repel an expected counter-attack by the 21st S.S. Panzers, who were known to be in the area. Nothing developed however, and after waiting four hours the Squadron finally withdrew into harbour in a small orchard north of COLLEVILLE. There they refuelled and tried to snatch a few hours' sleep.

R.H.Q. had been in fairly good radio touch with all Squadrons throughout the assault, and by ten o'clock that night succeeded in concentrating the Regiment in an orchard in the southern outskirts of HERMANVILLE, where they went into harbour for the remainder of the night.

Losses inflicted on the enemy by the Regiment were estimated at sixty killed, forty captured, two 88mm. guns and two motor-cycles destroyed, and one staff car captured, apart from the damage done by the D.D. tanks during the beach bombardment.

The Regiment's casualties during the day amounted to twelve killed and twelve wounded, whilst seventy-eight other ranks were reported missing, the majority of whom were presumably lost off the beaches but rejoined later.

When the fighting on D-day in this sector ended, the 8th Infantry Brigade, with the Regiment in support, had captured all their objectives. The 185th Infantry Brigade, with the Staffordshire Yeomanry, had passed through the Regiment and were on the high ground north of CAEN, whilst the 9th Infantry Brigade, with the East Riding Yeomanry, had not been committed.

Rommel's Atlantic Wall had been shattered by the assault on the whole front. D-day had been won, but this was only the first of many days of grim struggle and bitter fighting which lay ahead.

*

*

*

Although the 'optimum' phase line had not been reached along the whole front of the Allied assault, by D+1-day, the general pattern of the plan had been successfully fulfilled. The 1st United States Army (General Bradley)

on the right was having an exciting time at OMAHA beach, but was not to be dislodged. The assault of the 2nd British Army (Lieutenant-General Dempsey¹) had gone more or less according to plan. Airborne operations had been remarkably successful, and the 6th Airborne Division had seized the bridges over the ORNE at BENOUVILLE and RANVILLE. CAEN had not been captured as had been hoped, but this had by no means been counted upon by General Montgomery, and it soon became apparent that it would not be an easy task. The Regiment spent a short but quiet night at HERMANVILLE and were up early on the morning of the 7th of June (D+1-day). 'C' Squadron took up positions in 'MORRIS' (the first objective of the previous day), and remained there until the late afternoon, when they moved forward with 'B' Squadron through COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER, and took up a covering position looking down on BENOUVILLE and the famous 'PEGASUS' bridge in support of the 6th Airborne Division, who were being attacked by enemy tanks at the bridges over the ORNE and CAEN CANALS. This enemy counter-attack, however, failed to materialise seriously, and the Regiment remained on the west bank of the river until they went into harbour at ST. AUBIN D'ARQUENAY at nightfall.

During the day everyone took their first opportunity of filling in their field postcards to assure their wives and families that, so far, all was well, and a few paid a brief visit to the trenches and living quarters of the defenders of 'MORRIS'. These were a complete shambles, having obviously been evacuated in a great hurry. Clothing, food, maps, pamphlets and photographs were strewn in confusion all over the place. This was a foretaste of what was to be a familiar sight later. Here the troops also became acquainted with the somewhat overpowering scented and sickly smell of the brilliantine and soap used by the Boche, which characterised the German dug-outs.

Meanwhile 'A' Squadron, or what was left of it, had

¹ Later General Sir Miles Dempsey, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.

returned to LION-SUR-MER, which was still occupied by pockets of the enemy. There they continued to hunt the Boche until ordered to rejoin the remainder of the Regiment at ST. AUBIN on the 9th.

The Regiment remained in this harbour area for three days, learning how to cook compositions on petrol stoves, taking the propellers and canvas screens off the remaining D.D. tanks with the aid of the Light Aid Detachment, discovering how to sleep in comparative comfort and safety in shallow pits dug underneath the tanks, and how to take a bath in a canvas bucket full of cold water. Meanwhile new tanks and crews were arriving to build up again the battered squadrons.

MAP 4

On the 10th of June, R.H.Q., 'B' Squadron and the Reconnaissance Troop took part in a supposedly minor operation in support of the 7th and 11th Para.-battalions of the 6th Airborne Division, with the object of effecting a junction with the 3rd Para.-Brigade, which had been cut off from the rest of the Division.

The party made their way down the hill to BENOUVILLE and over the bridge spanning the ORNE and CAEN CANAL. Units were briefed on the far side of the river, and the attack started at 2.30 p.m. The operation was completely successful, and the enemy were estimated to have lost a hundred killed and over one hundred prisoners. Unfortunately, several enemy anti-tank guns, concealed in BREVILLE woods on the left flank, opened up, destroying two Stuart tanks and four Shermans of the Regiment. Lieutenant Hardy and eight other ranks were killed, and Lieutenant Coker and two other ranks wounded. The men of the 6th Airborne Division, who had been having a very tough time, were delighted and heartened by this operation, and by the mere presence of the tanks.

On the 12th of June, the whole Regiment moved over to the right bank of the ORNE in support of the 6th Airborne Division, and part of the 51st (Highland) Division, to secure the right flank of the latter. 'A'

Squadron, with the Para.-Brigade, attacked BREVILLE in the evening, and succeeded in shooting their infantry into the village. 'B' Squadron was rushed to the support of the 5th Black Watch at the CHATEAU DE ST. COME, near BREVILLE, whilst R.H.Q. and 'C' Squadron moved into harbour near BENOUVILLE. Fighting was severe but successful, the enemy suffering considerable casualties and losing six 75mm. guns. That night 'A' Squadron was left in support of the infantry in BREVILLE, whilst the remainder of the Regiment withdrew into harbour.

The Regiment sustained a severe loss on the 16th of June, when the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel R. T. G. Harrap, was killed by a 'spandau'¹ bullet from an enemy tank, whilst returning from ESCOVILLE in his jeep. He had served with the Regiment for nearly seventeen years, and had shown himself to be a fearless leader, a keen regimental officer, and a first-class commanding officer, whom all ranks trusted and admired. He was buried in the 3rd Division cemetery at COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER on the following day.

Major The Earl of Feversham, who had come to the Regiment from the Yorkshire Hussars shortly before D-day, took over command. Major Rugge-Price, to the sorrow of 'B' Squadron, went as Second-in-Command, and Captain Lyon, from 'A' Squadron, took over command of 'B' Squadron.

During the next few days the general situation in the bridgehead remained unchanged, Detachments of the Regiment took part in several minor operations in support of units of the 51st (Highland) Division, and there was a considerable amount of sporadic and heavy shelling, which caused some casualties.

Main residues,² due to land on D+9 and D+10-days, did not arrive, as the build-up had been considerably delayed by bad weather in the Channel and by enemy

¹ Rapid-fire German medium machine gun.

² Reinforcements.

shelling of the beaches, which were still well within enemy artillery range in this sector.

It was one morning, about this time, that German aircraft dropped showers of propaganda leaflets to inform our troops that—‘London is in flames and rapidly being destroyed by the new flying bombs.’ If you do not believe it, you have only to make your way to a nearby hill whence you will be able to see, in the far distant sky, flames and smoke belching up hundreds of feet in the air from the doomed capital.’ It was a crude form of propaganda and everyone laughed, although a trifle worried about the flying bomb offensive, which had been launched against England on the night of the 15th/16th of June.

Several days later, early one morning, the troops were suddenly surprised by a very loud, low, raucous and vibrating noise in the sky. Thinking it to be a strange type of enemy aircraft about to dive-bomb them, they were ready with the Anti-Aircraft guns, but, as the object came into view, all held their breath. The noise was coming from what looked like a long and enormous bomb, with flames shooting out of its tail. Suddenly they realised that this was the flying bomb. How it came to be flying east towards German-occupied territory was not discovered, but luckily the Anti-Aircraft gunners missed their target.

*

*

*

MAP 4 It was on the 23rd of June that the Regiment achieved its most signal success of the whole campaign over enemy armour. The Regiment was in support of the 152nd Infantry Brigade of the 51st (Highland) Division and was fully deployed between ESCOVILLE and ST. HONORINE LA CHARDONERET, with ‘C’ Squadron in and around the former, ‘B’ Squadron in the centre, and ‘A’ Squadron at ST. HONORINE itself.

At about first light, the 5th Camerons had attacked ST. HONORINE but failed to get into the village. ‘A’

¹ The V.1, followed later by the V.2.

Squadron then came forward and succeeded in shooting their way in without loss. The infantry followed up and took over, but, owing to the very well concealed cross fire from machine guns and Spandaus, suffered heavy casualties. There was also a considerable amount of shelling and mortar fire on the village and its approaches, and R.H.Q. command post was severely 'stonked'.

Whilst 'mopping-up' operations were still going on, a counter-attack by enemy infantry developed from the north-west. This was beaten off with difficulty. But, a short time later, enemy tanks were reported moving northwards across the BUTTE DE LA HOGUE—an open, undulating and cultivated area without trees or any other form of tank obstacle. This was later confirmed by Captain Wardlaw and Trooper Urquhart, who were in observation up a tree south of ESCOVILLE and connected by telephone with a wireless jeep below.

Enemy tanks, self-propelled guns¹ and other vehicles were seen moving from CUVERVILLE—first 20, then 25, then 35, and then another 8—making some 43 in all. They halted just behind the ridge in line ahead, and then turned north-west and moved on ST. HONORINE. As the leading tanks came within range, 'A' Squadron opened fire and, with some quick shooting, knocked out the two leading tanks and some half-tracks. Our own medium artillery then opened fire and the enemy halted, losing several more tanks hit. The enemy split into two parts; some retired eastwards and took up a hull-down position facing Lieutenant Norris's troop of 'C' Squadron, who managed to destroy two. The remainder turned north and gave 'A' Squadron a magnificent shoot. It claimed to have destroyed another eight—Serjeant Cooper certainly got four, Lieutenant Spencer's troop two, and Major Wormald himself one and possibly another. 'B' Squadron also fired at long range, claiming one. The Regiment suffered no casualties. The enemy then turned away south and rocket-

¹ Self-propelled guns mounted on tank chassis.

firing typhoon aircraft took subsequent toll of the fleeing remnants.

During the following days, all three squadrons remained in position and spent periods of acute discomfort in the BOIS DE BAVENT and ST. HONORINE areas, whilst R.H.Q. was near the bridges on the BENOUVILLE/RANVILLE road, dodging shells and air bursts. The enemy seemed to have had enough, and no further serious attack developed before the Regiment was ordered to move to LUC-SUR-MER for rest and re-equipment, being relieved by the 148th Regiment Royal Armoured Corps.

So, leaving the 51st (Highland) Division and their gallant friends of the 6th Airborne, the rear-most units of the Regiment recrossed the ORNE on 5th of July and left the bridgehead, where they were credited with the destruction of 21 enemy tanks, including one Tiger, during some very stiff fighting.

In recrossing the Bailey bridge, the end of a definite phase in the campaign had been reached so far as the Regiment was concerned. All ranks had now seen battle and were beginning to feel the confidence of veterans. The weary months spent in hard training had paid a good dividend. The Regiment had, in fact, been tested and not found wanting.

*

*

*

The beach areas showed an amazing transformation. Beach area organization, which had been meticulously planned beforehand, had got to work. Troops were no longer permitted to move gaily up the road from BENOUVILLE to ST. AUBIN and HERMANVILLE. Instead, Military Police directed the columns along a well-marked tank track, called 'Dog', through the fields, with which the Regiment was to become very familiar. Hessian screens had been erected here and there to shield movements from enemy view. Now the roads were packed with masses of vehicles of all kinds. Every field seemed to have its full complement of slit trenches and

soldiers, and from the crest of ST. AUBIN hill could be seen a dense armada of ships off-loading this remarkable concentration of men, equipment, and stores. The vast machinery of movement and supply to 'build up' the Allied Armies and keep them continuously supplied with enormous numbers of men and vehicles and huge tonnages of stores had got under way.

The destination of the Regiment was the little coastal village of LUC-SUR-MER, some five miles west of HERMANVILLE. There the Squadrons were able to sleep under some sort of a roof, other than the hull of a tank, and to settle down to rest and maintenance of vehicles. Squadron messes were brought up and officers found a reliable source of Sauterne and Barsac. They even managed to procure adequate supplies of Camembert and the delicious 'fromage double crème de la laiterie co-opérative d'Isigny'. Many found time for a bathe in the sea, where they could watch that remarkable amphibious vehicle, the 'D.U.K.W.', plying unceasingly between ship and shore, shielded from enemy view by the great smoke screen at OUISTREHAM.

But the stay at LUC-SUR-MER was to be only a brief interlude, and on the 7th of July the Regiment moved to an assembly area north of CAZELLE. On that day, Bomber Command dropped 2,350 tons of explosives in just under forty minutes on the hinge of the German line at CAEN, where the 1st Canadian and 2nd British Armies were pressing the enemy hard. The effect of this attack on the morale of the enemy was shattering, although casualties were comparatively light. It was the first time that aircraft of Bomber Command were used to prepare the way for offensive action by the Army. MAP 5

At two o'clock in the morning of the 8th of July, the Regiment moved into battle formation, under cover of medium artillery fire, to support the 176th Infantry Brigade of the 59th (Midland) Division (Major-General L. O. O. Lyne). The initial concentration of the Regiment

was:— 'B' Squadron in the area west of the CHATEAU DE LA LONDE, 'C' Squadron to the east of it, 'A' Squadron in reserve, and R.H.Q. with the command post of 176th Brigade south of LE MESNIL wood.

The attack started at 4.20 a.m. under cover of an intense artillery barrage towards the obliterated villages of LA BIJUDE and EPERON. The battle raged all day. Heavy shelling and mortar fire pinned down the 7th North Staffordshire Regiment, but 'B' Squadron entered LA BIJUDE at the cost of Lieutenant Downer's tank destroyed, and that of Corporal Jackson hit on the turret. Two enemy tanks were knocked out in return. Meanwhile 'C' Squadron, with the 7th Norfolk Regiment, met severe opposition in an attempt to push on south-east of LA BIJUDE towards EPERON. The attack was renewed later in the evening, with the impressive aid of Crocodile flame-throwers, but it was not until 9.30 p.m. that the infantry were reported to have taken EPERON and advanced as far as AUBERGE, where they were digging in. At 10.30 p.m. the Regiment was withdrawn from the battle and moved into harbour south of CAZELLE. The Regiment claimed to have knocked out six Mark IV tanks at a cost to themselves of six Shermans. One other tank was killed, and Lieutenant Akers-Douglas and six other ranks were wounded.

'A' and 'B' Squadrons moved out again the following day in support of battalions of the 176th Infantry Brigade in further fighting, but at 9 p.m. the whole Regiment was again rallied at CAZELLE and moved into harbour at the CHATEAU D'ANISY, where it came into reserve under command of 1 Corps, with the remainder of 27th Armoured Brigade. The result of this fighting, in which the part played by the Regiment has been briefly described above, was the capture of CAEN, which was entered by our troops on the 10th of July.

On this date, Lieutenant-Colonel V. A. B. Dunkerly assumed command of the Regiment. Major The Earl of Feversham reverted to Second-in-Command, and Major

Rugge-Price and Captain Lyon returned to their old squadrons.

The Regiment spent six days at CAZELLE, and this proved to be the best break they were to have in the Normandy campaign. Messes were re-established, and all ranks lived in greater comfort than at LUC-SUR-MER. The tanks were parked in the orchards, and most troops acquired some sort of a cow which served to supply fresh milk for morning tea whilst maintenance was going on. It was a happy arrangement as the cows badly needed milking, and everyone was equally pleased to have the fresh milk.

As the week drew to its close, rumours began to circulate once more. The daily news sheets told the Regiment that the Americans had cleared up the COTENTIN PENINSULA and occupied CHERBOURG, and, with the 2nd British Army, had advanced beyond ST. LO. The troops had seen for themselves the astonishing concentration of forces in the ever-expanding perimeter of the bridgehead.

Rumour soon crystallised into something more concrete. The Regiment was going back once more over the ORNE to the 'eastern' front. All were pleased as they knew the ground there well. Something big was in the offing. This was, in fact, the beginning of that phase in the Normandy campaign which ended on the 19th of August in the great victory of the Battle of the FALAISE GAP.

* * *

It would hardly be possible to give a detailed account of all the many actions and movements in which the Regiment took part during the subsequent fighting in Normandy. Normandy was not ideal tank country. The topography had been very carefully studied during the planning stage of the campaign, and it was fully appreciated how difficult the employment of armour would be. Nevertheless, our troops were committed to this country, and it was a question of using the tanks to the best advantage in support of the infantry, who not only needed

MAP 4

it, but expected it. This meant that, during the greater part of the fighting which took place, the Regiment operated with squadrons and troops in close support of infantry battalions and companies, and seldom as a regiment in a purely tank rôle, or as part of a higher tank formation. It will be understood, therefore, that any attempt to describe the actions of the Regiment in detail would result in a lengthy and rather confused story, which would be difficult to follow.

*

*

*

The general plan of the operation, which opened on the 18th of July, was for 8 Corps, with 7th, 11th and 8th Armoured Divisions under command, to break out from the bridgehead and recapture the high ground BOURGEBUS - VINIOUT - ARGENES - FALAISE. 1 Corps was to secure their left flank. 27th Armoured Brigade, under command of 1 Corps, was to support the 3rd Infantry Division, with the 13th/18th Hussars in support of the 8th Infantry Brigade; Staffordshire Yeomanry with the 185th Infantry Brigade, and East Riding Yeomanry with the 9th Infantry Brigade.

The story of the Regiment during the next two weeks is best given in the words of Captain J. H. Aldam ('B' Squadron), who paints a brief, but accurate, picture of the severe fighting in which the Regiment took part:—

'We left CAZELLE about tea-time, on the 16th of July, and moved in a long regimental column north-west up the 'Cat' track across country. We halted at the western end of the PERIERS slope facing the sea until nightfall, when the march was resumed. The dust along 'Cat' and 'Dog' tracks was appalling, and, travelling in the dark with no lights, was exceedingly difficult. At ST. AUBIN we turned off and passed over two bridges, which had been erected since we left, to the north of those at BENOUVILLE. The journey was long and halting, and, from information gleaned *en route*, we gathered that practically the whole of the armoured

forces (8 Corps)¹ of 2nd Army had crossed the ORNE.

'It was fully daylight by the time we eventually harboured just behind ESCOVILLE and the BUTTE DE LA HOGUE. After a much-needed wash and breakfast, we settled down to what rest we could get. Briefing went on throughout the day. A great armoured attack was to be launched the following day, preceded by bomber support on an unparalleled scale. With our own Brigade on the left guarding their flank, the 11th and Guards Armoured Divisions, with the 7th Armoured Division leap-frogging through, were to cross the BUTTE DE LA HOGUE and drive via CUVERVILLE, GRENTHEVILLE and BOURGEBUS to FALAISE. We were to support the 8th Infantry Brigade, our old friends of D-day, each squadron with its old battalion.

'Soon after dawn on the 18th of July, after an immense fleet of bombers had dropped over six thousand tons of bombs² in the villages and defence works ahead of us, the great attack went in under cover of a monster artillery barrage. Our job was to capture the villages on the western edge of the BOIS DE BAVENT and secure the left flank of the advance of the Armoured Corps. South Lancashire Regiment and 'A' Squadron captured PREBARON with little difficulty, whilst 'B' Squadron went over the crest of the BUTTE and took many prisoners out of a large trench system.

'A particularly fine piece of work by Lieutenant Franks and Serjeant Hardy resulted in the capture of the village of TOUFFREVILLE virtually single-handed after flail tanks had cleared a path for them through the minefield up to the BUTTE. 'C' Squadron and the Suffolk Regiment took SANNERVILLE, where Lieutenant Uttley was wounded.

'Later in the day, with streams of armour and all types

¹ Commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Richard O'Connor, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C., the victorious commander of the Western Desert Force in Libya, 1940-41.

² 2,100 Heavy and Medium aircraft of Bomber Command and 8th and 9th U.S. Airforce took part.

of vehicles passing over the exposed BUTTE under intense shell-fire, and, after the infantry had taken over the villages we had helped to capture, the Regiment rallied on the high ground near ESCOVILLE where, despite considerable shelling, A.I. Echelon carried out a most commendable work of refuelling and replenishing the tanks. During the day Captain Lyon-Clark and one other rank were killed, and Mechanist-Quartermaster-Serjeant Turner and twelve other ranks were wounded near ESCOVILLE.

'We stayed up on the BUTTE DE LA HOGUE for about three days, living in great discomfort. The tanks were spaced out in the cornfields. Heavy rain made sleeping under the vehicles impossible, and incessant shell-fire compelled our sleeping inside the tanks. The ravages of millions of mosquitoes did little to improve our tempers or appearances. There were a considerable number of casualties and the Medical Officer, Captain Cameron, R.A.M.C., was indefatigable. On the evening of the 22nd of July permission was granted to the Regiment to move to a safer area north-east of ESCOVILLE, less 'A' Squadron, which was left in observation of the BUTTE. We already knew that the 11th Armoured Division had sustained very severe losses in tanks between GRENTHEVILLE and BOURGEBUS, and that the great armoured drive had been halted there.

'Nothing happened during the next two days, but, on the night of the 25th, the sky was set aglow with a panoply of chandelier flares, and the Regiment was bombed with high fragmentation bombs followed by a quick concentration of heavy calibre fire, which caused the loss of one Stuart tank, killing the troop serjeant and wounding Lieutenant Cornwall and one other rank. Intermittent shelling continued throughout the following day, and the area was altogether very unhealthy.

'We were all somewhat dispirited by the failure of the great tank 'push' to FALAISE, and were not sorry when we were ordered back on the evening of the 26th into

army reserves at COULOMBS, being relieved by the 33rd Armoured Brigade.

'That night we learnt from the Commanding Officer to our sorrow that the 27th Armoured Brigade was being broken up, and that the Regiment was to replace the 24th Lancers in the 8th Armoured Brigade.

'The prospect of having to take down our "Sea-horse" signs was not a happy one and there was much ribald abuse of the Higher Command. The second part of the proposition, that we were to go to the BAYEUX area to rest and refuel, was a more congenial one. We were leaving the ORNE bridgehead for the last time.'

Since the 17th of July, the Regiment had lost one officer and eleven other ranks killed and six officers and nineteen other ranks wounded—a remarkably high proportion of officers. Eight tanks in all had been destroyed, apart from a number of vehicles. But the Regiment had not failed to carry out its allotted tasks in support of the infantry, and had, in doing so, inflicted severe losses on the enemy, both in men and equipment.

One day was spent at COULOMBS in re-organization and re-equipment before the Regiment moved to LA SENAUDIÈRE, just south of BAYEUX, and joined the 8th Armoured Brigade (Brigadier G. E. Prior-Palmer¹) under command of 30 Corps. The other two regiments in this Brigade were the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards and the Nottinghamshire (Sherwood Rangers) Yeomanry. MAP 6

They were now in the heart of the well-known BOCAGE² country. The close, hilly, densely wooded area around the bitterly contested town of VILLERS BOCAGE—a country well-suited for defence—but exceedingly difficult for tank manœuvre in an offensive rôle.

¹ Who had been transferred from the 27th Armoured Brigade in relief of Brigadier H. J. B. Cracroft.

² 'Bocage'—pasture land divided by unusually high hedges, banks and ditches into many small fields and meadows, which extended to a depth of about forty miles inland from the Normandy coast.

The impending battle was a large-scale attack through the BOCAGE country to take advantage of the American success to the west. The Regiment was to operate initially in support of the 50th (Northumbrian) Division (Major-General D. Graham), with 'A' and 'C' Squadrons in support of the 56th and 231st Infantry Brigades respectively and 'B' Squadron in reserve.

The attack started on the morning of the 30th. The fighting was severe but by the evening of the following day both Squadrons had reached the high ground south of ST. GERMAIN D'ECOL and ORBOIS. The Regiment was then transferred to support the 69th Infantry Brigade (50th Division) and took part in the capture of AMAYE-SUR-SEULLES on the 2nd of August, being afterwards withdrawn into harbour to the west. Further advance from the north, however, was barred by the formidable feature, MONT PINCON, 1,200 feet high, which dominated the whole landscape from the RIVER VIRE to the ODON. From its slopes German observation was uninterrupted, and the enemy were able to bring down deadly artillery and mortar fire on any movement.

It was therefore decided to renew the attack from the west and on the 5th and 6th of August a determined attack was made on MONT PINCON from the west by the 43rd Division with the Regiment in support of the leading Infantry Brigade. The story is taken from the records of the 8th Armoured Brigade:—

'The 13th/18th Hussars, supporting the 129th Infantry Brigade (43rd Division), made repeated and determined assaults upon the western foothills. Throughout a day of scorching heat the battle raged, but the infantry became pinned at every fresh attempt. Towards evening, when hope of success had apparently vanished, two troops of the 13th/18th Hussars, led by Captain Denny, found their way across an anti-tank ditch in the face of which the advance had faltered. Regardless of the German infantry in thick scrub and a

desperately steep escarpment, they drove right on to the table-like summit of the now famous mountain, where, completely alone, and surrounded by the enemy, the troops shot it out until joined by the remainder of the Squadron, and finally the Regiment. At last light thick mist settled down and the Regiment spent the night sharing the summit with the Hun. At intervals the German soldiers wandered right past our tanks. By morning, however, the 4th Somerset Light Infantry and the Wiltshire Regiment had arrived on the top, and, during the next day, the remaining Germans were driven out, leaving the mountain in our hands.'

The capture of MONT PINCON was the turning point of the break-out. The Regiment can be justly proud of the vital part played in this desperate battle, and it is, therefore, worth recording in further detail the following account written by Captain N. N. M. Denny, of 'A' Squadron:—

'The Squadron sat about 200 yards short of the stream which ran across the front from six until dusk and were shelled almost continually. The infantry suffered heavy casualties. It was not until we got on top of the mountain and looked back to where we had been sitting that we discovered that our position must have been clearly seen by any number of German artillery forward observing officers, although we thought we were well covered by a huge treed hedge. We were very lucky not to have had any casualties.

'At dusk we went back and harboured with the Regiment west of CHANTEPIE cross-roads.

'The next morning at 8 o'clock Lieutenants Elliott's and Watt's troops went out to the position of the previous night to support the leading companies of the 5th Wiltshire Regiment. During this time the Commanding Officer of the 5th Wiltshire Regiment was giving out his orders for the attack on MONT PINCON by his battalion supported by 'A' Squadron. At 11

o'clock the right-hand company supported by Lieutenant Elliott's troop was counter-attacked and Major D. B. Wormald left the battalion commander's order group to go out and deal with the nuisance. This most uncalled for interruption necessitated postponing H Hour from noon till two o'clock.

'The Squadron Leader came back to the harbour area to give out orders, but, as he came into the corner of the field and blew the inevitable whistle for crew commanders, a heavy 'stonk'¹ came down and held up proceedings for a few minutes. Eventually the 'O' Group² formed up in a sunken road, with each person sitting in a slit trench and the Squadron Leader shouting at the top of his voice to make himself heard above the noise of the shells passing overhead. He walked up and down, apparently unconcerned.

'At ten to two the barrage opened on the Boche positions on the other side of the stream, and by half-past two the two leading companies—or what was left of them, after being heavily shot-up by Spandaus—were over the river. Corporal Hammond then led Lieutenant Elliott's troop over the stream. They were not able to get off the road, as it was cut into the side of the hill, a sheer bank on one side and a steep drop on the other.

'Lieutenant Watt's troop followed and managed to find a way out to the right and took up a position there. By this time the Colonel of the 5th Wiltshire Regiment had been killed and the battalion, now down to sixty men, was commanded by the Adjutant. The remainder of the Squadron were now over the river, and at this point in the proceedings five Boche infantry, all armed with bazookas, who had been sitting beside my tank on the road, came out of the hedge and gave themselves up, to my intense relief.

'Another concentration was called for on the village of LA VARINIERE and when this came down the attack

¹ Slang term for artillery bombardment. ² Order Group.

went in with the sixty men and was successful. The Squadron was now disposed to the east and north of the village and 'C' Squadron came up on our right flank. At this time forty to fifty Boche who had been bypassed to the left of the road came in and gave themselves up.

'The Infantry Brigadier then decided that the 5th Wiltshire Regiment, with 'A' Squadron still in support, should push on to the top of the hill. H Hour was to be 6 p.m. However, 150mm. shells began bouncing on the cross-roads and in LA VARINIERE itself. This pinned the infantry to the ground. Lieutenant-Colonel V. A. B. Dunkerly, commanding the Regiment, was not to be done in by this slight setback, and ordered Major Wormald to send an armoured patrol to the top of the hill, warning him at the same time that there were almost certainly 88mm. anti-tank guns and enemy infantry in position on the summit. For the best part of two months the Regiment had been fighting in the closest possible co-operation with infantry, and it was considered a very dangerous performance in the close Normandy country to advance without infantry and artillery support. Therefore, realising that it would almost certainly be my job to command the half-squadron which would carry out the patrol, I viewed the future with gravest possible concern and gloom. However, hope, as ever, springing eternal in the human heart, I set off with Lieutenant Elliott's and Lieutenant Jennison's troops to patrol to the top.

'We advanced with Lieutenant Jennison's troop leading across a large wheatfield, past a small wood on our right, which we shot up, but which did not, in fact, contain any enemy. Then past some quarries, into one of which Corporal Davies's tank fell and overturned, and finally took up hull-down positions at the base of the hill proper, 2nd Troop right, 3rd Troop left.

'Serjeant Rattle's tank (3rd Troop) then had its track blown off by an armour-piercing shot, but from which direction it was impossible to tell. 2nd Troop and myself

then laid a smoke screen, the first round of which, for once in a way, bounced absolutely right and blew very slowly in the right direction, completely blotting out the southern half of the position. Lieutenant Jennison's tank then raced to the top of the hill, followed shortly afterwards by Lieutenant Elliott's. During this movement we were not once shot at, the Boche being caught on the top looking east instead of west. By half-past six we had seven tanks in an all-round defensive position on the summit.

'While this had been going on, the Squadron Leader's tank had been hit by a 150 mm., and had then gone over a minefield accompanied by another tank just east of LA VARINIERE. The Armoured Recovery Vehicle, which went to tow them out, also went up on a mine and was then brewed up with several armour-piercing rounds. Contrary to expectations, it was much more pleasant at the top than at the bottom of MONT PINCON, as it was a lovely summer evening. At 8 p.m. the Colonel came up and joined us, but there was still no sign of our infantry and we began to feel a trifle lonely. Shortly afterwards the remainder of the Squadron came up. As it was getting dark, we pulled into a very close leaguer and the 4th Somerset Light Infantry Regiment began to arrive and dig in around us. Their intelligence officer talked to some Boche who could clearly be heard digging in less than one hundred yards from us, oblivious of our presence. They were made aware of it by a 75 mm. shell which went just above their breakfast table next morning.

'By this time a thick fog had come down and 'B' Squadron, who were coming up on another part of the hill, arrived led by their Squadron Leader on foot with a compass in his hand. We were told a few weeks later that the fog was our salvation, as a large German counter-attack, which had formed up and would almost certainly have succeeded in driving us off the position, lost the way in the fog.

'During the evening and night of the 6th/7th August,

the route from LA VARINIERE to the top of the hill was covered by direct enemy fire, which made it, as one rather old-timer gunner Colonel remarked, "a demmed nasty salient".

'Next morning 'B' Squadron was given the task of clearing the ridge, which was successfully carried out, and MONT PINCON was finally and firmly in our hands.'

*

*

*

Further desperate fighting took place around LE PLESSIS GRIMOULT in which the Regiment took part before they concentrated for the night of the 7th/8th August in an area north-west of VILLERS BOCAGE.

The Regiment, however, again returned to the battle a day later, this time in support of the 151st Infantry Brigade (50 Division), who were to attack to a depth of two miles south of PLESSIS GRIMOULT.

At 1 p.m., 'C' Squadron was reported on the objective with the 8th Durham Light Infantry, but 'B' Squadron, with the 6th Durham Light Infantry, ran into trouble, two tanks going up on mines, three being destroyed by armour-piercing shot, one hit by high explosive shell, and one ditched, leaving only five. The infantry, however, fought their way on to their objective and dug in. 'A' Squadron was in reserve but took part in an attack on the following day.

On the 12th of August, the Regiment once more attacked in support of the 151st Infantry Brigade. The objectives were successfully reached and consolidated by the evening, and at 10 p.m. the whole Regiment moved into harbour south-west of VILLERS BOCAGE for rest.

Since the 1st of August, losses in the Regiment were four officers killed (Captain P. E. L. Lyon, Captain J. I. H. Wardlaw, Lieutenant P. D. V. Hunter and Lieutenant T. A. S. Anderson) and four other ranks. One officer (2nd Lieutenant Downer) and twenty-three other ranks were wounded, and more than eleven tanks destroyed by enemy fire.

On the 14th of August, Lieutenant-General B. G. Horrocks,¹ who had recently taken over command of 30 Corps, visited the Regiment. He expressed his admiration for the fighting spirit of the Regiment and congratulated them on their magnificent efforts in the recent fighting. He also explained the general situation to all ranks. The American and Free French armour were pressing on towards ARGENTAN and FALAISE. The Canadians were attacking south-west from POTIGNY with the Polish Armoured Division. 12 Corps also were advancing south-east from THURY HARCOURT, whilst the Allied Air Forces were strafing daily and causing severe dislocation and heavy casualties in the enemy rear. The German 7th Army was beginning to crack, and the eighteen-mile gap at FALAISE, their only line of escape, was about to be closed.

The battle of the FALAISE GAP ended on the 19th of August, and the way was at last opened for the great advance across France and Belgium to the RHINE.

¹ Later Lt.-General Sir Brian Horrocks, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

Chapter 7

ADVANCE TO THE GERMAN/DUTCH FRONTIER

THROUGH FRANCE AND ACROSS THE SEINE - INTO BELGIUM
AND BRUSSELS - INTO HOLLAND - ARNHEM

THE Regiment had a few days for re-organization at CLAMESNIL, south-west of VILLERS BOCAGE, before starting to move eastwards on the 17th of August. The 8th Armoured Brigade was under command of 30 Corps, which was now to advance to the Seine on the right of the British Second Army, led by the 11th Armoured Division and the 43rd Division, via ARGENTAN and L'AIGLE to VERNON.

At this time General Montgomery sent a personal message to his troops:—

‘On the 11th of August I spoke to the officers and men of the Allied Armies in north-west France. I said we must “write-off” the powerful German forces that were causing us so much trouble; we must finish it once and for all, and so hasten the end of the war.

‘And today it has been done. The German Armies in north-west France have suffered a decisive defeat; the destruction of enemy personnel and equipment in and about the so-called “Normandy pocket” has been terrific, and is still going on; the enemy units that managed to get away will not be in a fit condition to fight again for months; there are still many surprises in store for the fleeing remnants. The victory has been complete, definite and decisive.’

*

*

*

Squadrons had been made up to strength in tanks and personnel—Captain J. A. O. Walker had arrived from England and was posted to ‘A’ Squadron, together with

MAPS
7 & 12

Lieutenant Peerless; Captain W. Wormald went to 'C' Squadron, and Captain G. C. Gale returned to 'B' Squadron from hospital.

On the 19th of August the Regiment went into harbour west of PUTANGES where they were halted owing to some delay caused in the building of the Bailey bridge over the ORNE. The 21st of August found the Regiment in the FÔRET DE GOUFFERN on mopping-up tasks in close support of the 8th Durham Light Infantry.

The weather had broken and it was very wet. The roads were congested with burnt-out and abandoned enemy tanks, transport and equipment, and there was evidence everywhere of the enormous destruction caused by air and artillery bombardments. Corpses of men and horses lay about, polluting the whole atmosphere—grim evidence of the filth and tragedy of war. Prisoners were coming in from the woods in great numbers, and there was no doubt of the overwhelming defeat which the enemy had suffered in the FALAISE pocket.

On the 25th of August, the French Armoured Division under General Leclerc entered PARIS. The French capital had been liberated two days previously by the Free French and civilians. On the same day the Regiment arrived at LA PORILLIERE just west of BRETEUIL, whilst the 43rd Division, with the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards, forced a crossing over the SEINE at VERNON. This hazardous operation was carried out on rafts and was launched at 7 p.m. under an intense barrage and smoke screen. Casualties were considerable, but, within seventy-two hours, a bridgehead had been formed four and a half miles deep, and the Royal Engineers had constructed a 680 ft. folding bridge followed by a Class 40 bridge over which the remainder of the Brigade was rushed on the 28th.

Hounds were now away on a hot scent, although short checks were frequent. 30 Corps moved with two Armoured Brigades leading; the 8th on the right and the 29th on the left, both under command of the 11th

THROUGH FRANCE AND ACROSS THE SEINE, AUGUST, 1944
Armoured Division. This was the first time that the 8th Armoured Brigade had operated in France in the rôle of an armoured brigade, as opposed to that in close co-operation with infantry.

The task of 30 Corps was to advance via GISORS - MAP 12
BEAUVAIS - AMIENS and establish itself in the area of
ARRAS - AMIENS, regardless of the progress of the forces
on its flanks. Now was the opportunity to push ahead at a
rapid speed, and Lieutenant-General Horrocks was not
the man to dally.

On the 29th the Regiment was leading the Brigade,
with 'A' Squadron, 'Recce' Troop, Motor Company—
12 King's Royal Rifle Corps, R.E. 'Recce' Detachment, and
forward observing officers from the 147th Field Regiment,
comprising the van and main guards. Some stiff opposition
was encountered at FOURGES, and the vanguard under
Captain Denny suffered some casualties. By evening all
squadrons of the Regiment had been in action before the
situation was cleared up. On the next day the Regiment
came into brigade reserve, and harboured for the night at
LA HOUSOYE. On the 31st, the Guards Armoured
Division took over the lead, and the Regiment followed
to an area just south of AMIENS.

On the 1st of September, the Regiment passed through
AMIENS and was across the SOMME. 'A' and 'C' Squadrons
and R.H.Q. made a hasty march round the right flank to
cut off the enemy withdrawing from DOULLENS towards
ARRAS, but, when they reached the main road, they found
no sign of Germans. They were, however, spotted by two
Spitfires which dived on them. R.H.Q. received most of
the attentions and lost the greater part of their baggage
from the backs of their tanks. This was an excusable error
considering the speed of the advance, and R.H.Q. was
able to forgive the injury. The Spitfires had done the
Regiment too many good turns to allow a small mistake
like this to upset the very sincere feelings of admiration
which existed.

Wherever the Regiment went it was met by jubilant inhabitants, and prisoners were continuously being rounded up by the Free French. Unfortunately the Regiment lost Lieutenant Jennison, who was accidentally killed by a 17-pounder shell from one of our own tanks.

On the 2nd of September, orders were received by the Guards Armoured Division to march on BRUSSELS, whilst the 11th Armoured Division was directed on ANTWERP via ALOST. The 8th Armoured Brigade was under command of the 50th Division and the Regiment moved with the 151st Infantry Brigade via ARRAS - LENS and BRUSSELS, behind the Guards Armoured Division. 'B' Squadron, with the 6th Durham Light Infantry, were in front and crossed the start line at 11.15 a.m. on the 3rd of September. They passed through ARRAS and the coal-mining district of LENS, where they had a great welcome from the local population. Pockets of enemy put up some resistance in LILLE, where confused fighting went on between the Free French and Germans until the town was cleared by the remainder of the 8th Armoured Brigade.

That night the Regiment harboured in the area of BENIFONTAINE, where Captain J. A. Stancomb and Lieutenant Coker rejoined, together with Lieutenants Jamieson and Townsend Green, and 2nd Lieutenants Belcher and Booth, all newly posted. The same evening news was received that the Guards Armoured Division had entered BRUSSELS.

The next day found the Regiment in the area of GONDECOURT, where they were occupied in clearing the area northwards to the LA BASSEE CANAL. Many prisoners were coming in, and 'C' Squadron destroyed two anti-tank guns and captured six more intact. They were now only six miles from their old billets of 1940 at LA VERDERIE. Parties went over in the evening and received a most enthusiastic welcome from their old friends.

At 2.45 p.m. on the 6th of September, the Regiment crossed the Belgian frontier at BAISIEUX. It was on the

10th of May, 1940—just over four and a quarter years before—that the Regiment had crossed this frontier at the same place. On that occasion it was in the van of the 1st Infantry Division advancing to meet the invading German Armies rolling westwards in overwhelming strength and confidence. The Regiment, too, had been full of confidence until hit by the flood wave and swept back to DUNKIRK, leaving it bewildered and stripped of everything except a stubborn refusal to accept this defeat as the final answer. There were Germans now who equally refused to admit final defeat, and were prepared to fight it out to the last round and the last man. But the great majority of the enemy knew that the end was near, and were ready to surrender whenever the opportunity offered.

There was a handful of officers and other ranks who were crossing this frontier for the second time, and they must have wondered how it was that Destiny had seen fit to bring them and their country safely through.

Although there was no respite for the Regiment on the Belgian frontier, it is as well to pause here in this narrative to review the swift advance which had taken place. Since the break-out from the Normandy bridge-head, the Regiment had covered over two hundred and eighty miles in some eighteen days, crossed the SEINE and the SOMME, where the enemy had been taken by surprise and given no time to put up a strong resistance. The events of the last two weeks had been a very welcome change after the hard slogging fight in Normandy, and it is not difficult to imagine the feelings in the ranks as they were welcomed by the liberated inhabitants and saw everywhere the unmistakable signs of a routed enemy.

The men of the Regiment have well named this part of the campaign 'The Battle of Flowers', in contrast to the gruesome scenes which they had witnessed on the beaches, the banks of the ORNE and on MONT PINCON.

British troops were in ANTWERP and had liberated

BRUSSELS. United States Forces had entered NAMUR and CHARLEROI. Canadians had surrounded CALAIS and French troops in the SAONE VALLEY had taken CHALONS-SUR-SAÔNE. Meanwhile the Russians were approaching WARSAW and had entered Bulgaria unopposed. The great pincers were closing on Germany.

On the evening of the 6th of September, the Regiment arrived at NINOVE, and, on the following afternoon, passed through BRUSSELS. An officer of the Regiment has described this unforgettable experience.

‘It was about five o’clock on the afternoon of the 7th of September that the leading tanks first entered the outskirts of the City itself.

‘There was little sign of fighting to be seen here, and the wide-eyed population was beginning to recover from the first shock of excitement at seeing British tanks and infantry.

‘As we came into the City, people were streaming from the houses and shelters by the thousand. It seemed that the clock had stopped, and the initiative had been taken right out of our hands by an uncontrolled and madly excited mass of people. For them life had been reborn after six years of death and the whole world had to know. No words of mine can do justice to this wonderful occasion or describe the tense excitement that was on every face. It was perhaps one of the most inspiring sights ever witnessed in this campaign by any individual taking part.

‘To these people, coming together after long years of fear and oppression, victory had come at last, bringing with it the freedom that was once their heritage and for which they had waited so long.

‘As for the fighting men, what greater reward could there be for the days of “blood and sweat” left behind and what better memories could they take with them into the tasks which lay ahead?

‘At times the cheers and screams from the delirious

crowd were deafening. Then the women and children in their brightest coloured clothes, each carrying some national flag of the victorious armies, crowded towards the tanks and trucks, their arms full of flowers and fruit, some laughing and some crying hysterically. They threw themselves at us, and hung garlands of flowers over the guns and beret-clad heads of the men, turning the armoured column into a carnival procession. Flowers were strewn everywhere and trampled into the ground so that the fragrance lingered in the air long after the procession had passed on. As we moved slowly through the seething and ever-increasing multitude, old national songs were taken up, songs they had been forced to forget during these last years.

‘And so we passed through, leaving behind such fantastic scenes of joy.’

*

*

*

The evening of the 8th found the Regiment in harbour at BEVERLOO, having marched through AEERSCHOT and DIEST and crossed the ALBERT CANAL at BEERINGEN, where considerable opposition had been met by leading units of the Brigade.

MAP 12

On the morning of the 9th, the enemy put in a strong counter-attack from the east along the Canal, which penetrated into the Brigade area of the A.1. Echelons and Light Aid Detachments. Thirty-three vehicles were ‘brewed up’, including fifteen ammunition and petrol lorries belonging to the Regiment. One other rank was killed, five wounded, and six missing. Troops of ‘B’ and ‘C’ Squadrons were turned out to restore the situation until the enemy withdrew after suffering heavy casualties. The men of the Echelons and Light Aid Detachments put up a magnificent fight.

Corporal Rubin of H.Q. Squadron gives the following graphic account of this action.

‘We had had our breakfast, after the morning “stand to”, and most of us were having a wash, when the

Honey tank on flank protection suddenly opened fire into the woods about thirty yards away. At the same time a couple of explosions were heard followed by great columns of flame from a petrol lorry which had gone up.

'I made my way cautiously up to the Honey tank and spoke to the commander, Corporal Kemp. He told me he had opened fire on some Germans he had seen crawling towards our field from the woods. The tank driver, Trooper Jervis, had also emptied three magazines of Sten into the fringe of the wood where he had seen more of the enemy.

'All this time things were getting warmer. There was a constant chatter of German automatics and a steady barrage of light mortar fire.

'At least a dozen 3-ton lorries of 'A' and 'B' Squadrons were burning about a hundred yards away. It looked as if the enemy were making a determined attack to break through and blow up the ALBERT CANAL bridge beyond.

'Nobody flustered. Every man at once took up a defensive position and covered every possible point of attack. I, myself, and the men nearby, moved forward with a Bren gun, covered by the Honey tank, to occupy a farmhouse about sixty yards ahead. Corporal Ridley joined us and we gained our objective and surrounded the house.

'Corporal Ridley and I then entered with a Bren and Sten gun. We heard a woman's voice. I called out in Belgian (which I can speak a little) for her to come out, telling her that we were British. She came out with her hands up and started crying. I told her not to be afraid and she told me what had happened. The Germans had entered her house about 6.30 a.m. and made her go down into the cellar; only five of them had entered but there were more outside. She then brought out a bottle of schnapps and we had a drink.

'By this time the others had searched all around the farmhouse and loft but found no one, so I called them

in to have a 'livener', as we were all shaken up a little. We then thought it best to return to the Echelons. As we moved away a mortar bomb fell about thirty yards off and we all jumped into a trench. The mortar fire became more intense, so we rushed back to the house where we thought there was better cover from shrapnel and falling trees.

'We stayed there about fifteen minutes ready to repel attack, when suddenly a terrific barrage opened up. We then crawled back bit by bit to the Echelons where we were told that our own 25-pounders were in action, and putting down the barrage just in front of our late position. After this all became quiet except for the noise of our tanks patrolling and rounding up prisoners. Over one hundred and fifty prisoners were taken. We had very few casualties and we saved the bridge which was very important to us.'

This brief episode is only one of many during the war which showed the mettle and determination of the men of the Echelons to secure and deliver the supplies, without which no army, much less a mechanised army, can keep the field.

The part played by the supply échelons of all Services must never be overlooked. Their front was vast and extensive. The Pioneers who handled the supplies on the beaches, at rail-heads, and in maintenance areas, the men of the depots and workshops in base areas and on the Lines of Communication, and the drivers of the hundreds of transport columns which filled the roads from front to rear. All these were fighting men without whose devotion to duty and gallantry there could have been no assault, build-up, break through, or long swift advance.

The 'pause for administrative reasons' was to come before the final blow could be delivered, but this was unavoidable. The fact that it took place later rather than sooner, and at so great a distance from the sources of supply in Great Britain, the United States of America and

other parts of the world even more distant, is a tribute to the men of the supply échelons of every sort and every service. No less credit is due to Captain and Quartermaster F. Sweeting and his staff, who never failed to see their Regiment supplied with everything they needed.

The vital importance of the efficient supply of petrol to fighting vehicles in the field has already been pointed out in a previous chapter. Tanks must often be replenished with petrol, oil and ammunition on the battlefield. The technique which must be developed to enable this to be carried out with speed, either by day or night, demands a very good 'drill' and the highest standard of teamwork between the fighting unit and its A.I. échelon.

The responsibility for first line repairs rested mainly upon unit fitters and the Light Aid Detachments which were attached to the Regiment from the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. This unit was also responsible for the evacuation of damaged tanks—a task which had frequently to be accomplished under fire. Reserve tanks and crews were held by Forward Delivery Squadrons under command of the Armoured Brigade and sent up to replace casualties as required. Rations, water, clothing, equipment, spare parts, mails, N.A.A.F.I.¹ stores and many other items must all be delivered to the forward troops under the various conditions of battle. Efficient supply and replacement is a vital factor in the maintenance of morale; and morale, as many great commanders in history have so often emphasised, is the greatest single factor in war.

*

*

*

On the 10th the Regiment was ordered to seize BOURG LEOPOLD, and, like many other battles seen in retrospect, the liberation of this place—the one-time Artillery School of Belgium—makes quite an amusing story which, as luck would have it, involved no casualties.

'B' Squadron was ordered to occupy the town which

¹ Navy Army and Air Force Institute.

lay about three miles along the road from where the Squadron was located. As it had been reported clear of the enemy, no trouble was expected. Nevertheless, all due military precautions were taken, and a barrage was put down ahead by the artillery in support. The rest of the story is told by the officer commanding the leading troop (Captain J. H. Aldam):—

‘About half a mile down the road—a cobble-stoned, tree-lined avenue—Lieutenant Knowles’ tank and my own had just turned a slight right-hand corner, when there was a flash and a streak of light passed across the front of Knowles’ tank. I thought he had been hit as the tank immediately stopped, but I was most relieved to see him reverse slightly into the side and then open fire with his anti-aircraft gun down the road.

‘I reported to the Squadron Leader over the wireless, and he then came up and asked Knowles if he could see the gun in question. I looked over and saw him pick up his microphone with his free hand—he was gaily firing his anti-aircraft gun with the other—and replied: “See it? I’m looking right down the barrel of the . . . thing.”’

‘Meanwhile we were firing away steadily until a message came over from Knowles: “My gun has jammed.” I brought up Serjeant York, who resumed firing high explosive down the road. Apparently Knowles had been reading “Hatter’s Castle” just before the battle began and had put the book down on top of the gun. When he had fired off his first round of high explosive, the book had become jammed in the recoil and the gun would not reload. Whilst Serjeant York and I continued our barrage down the road, he was busily engaged in pushing his gun up against various trees until, at last, he found one strong enough to make his gun recoil sufficiently to enable him to extract the erring book.

‘When he reported his gun O.K., we rocketed off down the road once more firing every gun we could

muster in every direction. We paused to put a round into the enemy gun which had been annoying us so much—a 75mm. anti-tank gun—and then we entered BOURG LEOPOLD itself, spraying every building with machine gun and high explosive fire. As there were no infantry with us and we had seen a few Germans running about in the area, we kept up sporadic firing to protect ourselves whilst we moved along the street.

‘I was looking out of the turret across some railway tracks, when I spied a Boche crawling in the grass quite close to my tank. I immediately fired on him with my machine gun and pistol, but he had the cover of some concrete railings and I could not deal with him to my satisfaction. I then called up my 17-pounder, which was standing on the cross-roads just behind, and told him to put a round of high explosive into the grass. As the great long barrel came menacingly round, a dirty white rag on the end of a very long pole peeped gingerly up out of what, I then saw, to be a trench in the grass. One by one there then emerged twelve paratroopers covered with stick grenades and lugers. I held them covered from my turret whilst my hull gunner, who had been dreaming of a chance like this, hopped out to glean the assembled harvest of pistols. We then seated our prisoners on the front of the tanks and prepared to take our leave.

‘When the order came to go back, I turned round to put a round of high explosive into the Boche ammunition truck, which went up like a chandelier flare. As we roared back up the road on our happy way home, we found that the road down which we had blazed our way, not an hour before, was lined with all manner of Belgian people cheering and waving flags. It was most touching that these self-same people, whose homes we had been obliged to ravage with shot and shell that very afternoon, had so soon forgiven and forgotten everything in the joy of their liberation. A fitting end to a bloodless and successful afternoon.’

On the 17th of September the battle of ARNHEM began. According to the official despatch, the essential feature of the plan was the laying of a carpet of airborne troops across the waterways from the MEUSE - ESCAUT CANAL to the NEDER RIJN (or Lower Rhine) on the general axis of the road through EINDHOVEN to GRAVE, NIJMEGEN and ARNHEM. The airborne carpet and bridgehead forces were provided by 82nd and 101st United States Airborne Divisions, 1st British Airborne Division and a Polish Parachute Brigade. Along the corridor, or airborne carpet, 30 Corps was to advance and establish itself north of the NEDER RIJN.

On the morning of the 17th of September the weather was fine and generally favourable for an airborne operation. The initial landings were successfully carried out and 30 Corps Commander immediately ordered his troops to advance. The leading troops (Guards Armoured Division) broke out over the ESCAUT bridgehead at DE GROOT barrier with orders to advance up the axis EINDHOVEN - GRAVE - NIJMEGEN to ARNHEM. Bitter fighting took place, but, by the evening of the 18th, the Guards had entered EINDHOVEN and linked up with the 101st United States Airborne Division, and, later, with the 82nd United States Airborne Division at NIJMEGEN. But it was not until the 21st that the bridge at that place was secured intact, after a particularly gallant action, and that the Guards Armoured Division was able to push forward towards ARNHEM. But the weather had broken and conditions were appalling. It was obvious that the operation called for infantry and the 43rd Division, which was now arriving at NIJMEGEN, was ordered forward to press the attack.

Meanwhile the Regiment had moved forward to HECHTEL, where they remained until 10 a.m. on the 20th before crossing the ESCAUT CANAL into Holland in support of the 130th Brigade Group (43rd Division). An hour and a half later they reached ZEELAND where they stayed the night. By 9 o'clock on the following day, leading patrols of 'C' Squadron crossed the bridge at NIJMEGEN, which

the Regiment had been ordered to secure from both sides of the river in support of the 130th Brigade.

Nothing further developed, and, on the morning of the 22nd, 'B' Squadron advanced towards ELST, in support of the 4th Wiltshire Regiment, where they met stiff opposition, one tank being destroyed, one other tank killed, and another wounded.

The full story of the historic battle of ARNHEM cannot be told here. But the Regiment saw the desperate attempts made to relieve the 1st British Airborne Division and the final withdrawal of the remnants across the NEDER RIJN. The part played by the Regiment during the last few days of this gallant struggle can best be told by recounting the following extracts from the Regiment's war diary as written at the time:—

MAP 8 *NIJMEGEN, 23rd, 06.00 hrs.*

We are now in support of the 130th Inf. Bde. and are going to continue to advance and meet up with the Airborne on the river west of ARNHEM which is strongly held by S.S. Tps. 'B' Sqn. in sp.¹ 7 Hamps., 'C' Sqn. in sp. 5 Dorset, 'A' Sqn. in reserve in sp. 7 Dorset.

08.00 hrs.

'A' Sqn. and R.H.Q. crossed the WAAL and were held up for some hours whilst some regrouping was carried out.

10.30 hrs.

Advance continued—'B' Sqn. moving via VALBURG and HOMOET to the NEDER RIJN just east of HETEREN—'C' Sqn. diverting at VALBURG and up to DRIEL. No opposition with their infantry by 17.00 hrs.

18.00 hrs.

R.H.Q. harboured with 130 Bde. south of HOMOET. Various plans were hatched for getting the Polish Bde. across the river to reinforce 1st Airborne Div. but few of them were carried out except a small crossing by two hundred Poles.

¹ Abbreviation for support.

HOMOET, 24th, 06.00 hrs.

Nothing to report. Weather extremely wet and cold. Things are not going so well with the Airborne Div. and the enemy are making a determined attempt to cut the Corps axis.

20.00 hrs.

Airborne bridgehead is to be reinforced tonight by 4 Dorset plus balance of Polish Bde. The story goes that there are only one thousand airborne tps. left in the bridgehead, that about two thousand have been captured and the remainder out of about eight thousand killed except for about three hundred and fifty wounded. The enemy is in occupation of ARNHEM itself, the bridge (still intact) and the dropping zone. The tps. are therefore running very short of supplies and ammunition.

The remainder of 130 Bde. less 7 Hamps are to ferry supplies and the Regt. is to keep up continual offensive action all night until 04.30 hrs. firing at opportunity targets in order to keep enemy occupied while relief is carried out.

25th, 01.30 hrs.

Above operation carried out with partial success.

06.00 hrs.

Nothing to report from forward Sqns. except fairly heavy shelling from 'C' Sqn. at first light. 'A' Sqn. released from sp. of 4 Dorset but remain at HOMOET. Constant rain is making the roads almost unserviceable and deployment across country quite impossible.

Our life line has again been cut somewhere north of EINDHOVEN but no one seems to worry much.

20.00 hrs.

The bridgehead at ARNHEM is to be evacuated. This is being effected tonight by the use of assault boats, DUKWS, etc. and a deceptive plan in which the Regt. is involved has been laid on.

26th, 06.00 hrs.

Last night's operation was successful and (surprisingly) over 2,000 airborne tps. were ferried back. A few remain the other side and the bulk of the Dorsets have not yet been found. Further efforts may be made tonight.

21.00 hrs.

Further patrols were sent across the river to locate the remainder in the bridgehead. This had some success but it would appear that 250 of the Dorsets will not come back.

27th, 13.00 hrs.

The Regt. less 'A' Sqn. has been released from sp. of 130 Bde. and are moving back to a maintenance-cum-rest area in OOSTERHOOT. 'A' Sqn. remain at HOMOET. Some tanks of 'C' Sqn. were bogged en route which necessitated some rather unpleasant recovery work by night in close proximity to the enemy.

The battle of ARNHEM was ended. In the words of Field-Marshal Montgomery:—

'We had undertaken a difficult operation, attended by considerable risks. It was justified because, had good weather obtained, there was no doubt that we should have attained full success.

' . . . The battle of ARNHEM was ninety per cent. successful. We were left in possession of crossings over four major water obstacles including the MAAS and the WAAL.

' . . . Full success at ARNHEM was denied us for two reasons: first, the weather prevented the build-up of our airborne forces in the battle area; second, the enemy managed to effect a surprisingly rapid concentration of forces to oppose us. In face of this resistance the British Group of Armies in the north was not strong enough to retrieve the situation created by the weather by intensifying the speed of operations on the ground. We could not widen the corridor sufficiently quickly to reinforce ARNHEM by road.'

Chapter 8

THE WINTER CAMPAIGN AND LAST ROUND

THE 'ISLAND' - PAUSE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REASONS
- GEILENKIRCHEN - WALDEFEUCH - CLEARING THE WEST
BANK OF THE RHINE - GOCH - ALPON ESCARPMENT - ACROSS
THE RHINE - THE LAST LAP - BREMEN - UNCONDITIONAL
SURRENDER - V.E. DAY

THE Regiment spent the greater part of October on the 'Island'—the area between the NEDER RIJN (LOWER RHINE) and the WAAL (RHINE). It was completely flat and overlooked by the high ground round ARNHEM, which was occupied by the enemy, and was neither a pleasant nor attractive part of the country. The only line of supply was over the bridge at NIJMEGEN. The roads were bad and off them the ground was boggy; one mistake on the part of a driver meant not only that he himself was stuck for a long time, but probably also some other column on the road. Few of the population were to be seen about, but the troops found shelter and very kind hospitality in the many small farms and hamlets scattered everywhere. There were frequent enemy air attacks, particularly against the bridge over the WAAL, and the Germans, who were extremely nervous, made many threats and minor counter-attacks which kept our troops constantly engaged and on the alert.

It was not surprising that life on the 'Island' caused an unpleasant feeling of insecurity and that, consequently, the troops disliked it intensely. Furthermore, it was now realised that a winter campaign lay ahead. This made everyone feel a little despondent. Things had gone so well up to ARNHEM that success had come to be taken for granted. Now bitterly cold winter months were visualized

ahead with much hard living in the open and continuous fighting for an indefinite period.

Such are the reactions which affect the thoughts of men on the battlefield. And it may have been in a moment of depression that a member of a tank crew wrote:—

‘The glow of “Monty’s moonlight”¹ lit the countryside for miles around and lent an air of eeriness to the night. The tanks moved along the roads towards the lights shining in the sky.

‘Men’s thoughts were filled with what tomorrow might hold for them. It was a cold night and gunners were stretched over the traverse trying to sleep, but couldn’t because of the wind drawn into the turret by the engine fan, and their troubled thoughts.

‘Most operators were munching away at vitamin chocolate and hard biscuits, or drowsing with the headsets droning in their ears. The drivers were most alert at this late hour (midnight) as they strained their eyes, peering forward, in an effort to see the tank in front.

‘The crew commanders stood looking out of the turrets, frozen stiff, and occasional pieces of grit stung their faces. All the countryside was still and quiet, except for the rumble of the tanks as they moved forward towards the distant flashes. Two hours later the lights were well behind and the artillery was shaking the air, as the tanks pulled into an orchard off the road. Everyone knew they were going into action but hoped it would not be till after breakfast.

‘No sooner were engines switched off than blankets were pulled out and slit trenches dug, while commanders went off to be briefed. Of course—it always happens—just as the majority of the men were crawling into bed, the commanders returned with the dreaded news of “move in one hour”. Curses and the replacing of kit broke the quietness of the orchard. Small stoves put in the slit trenches were hastily lit to make the

¹ Searchlights.

priceless cup of 'char'. In between studying and tea-making, the crew commanders were giving the 'gen' on the dawn attack. There was a queer feeling inside, as details of what was the objective were given, and an attempt at false cheerfulness was made as each tried to tell the other there was nothing in it. Yet they wondered.

'The tanks were finally stowed and tea gulped down while an odd joke was cracked. Tanks were started up; the gunner was in his seat meditating; the operator sat and listened to the few instructions coming over the air; and the driver adjusted his head-set for about the tenth time. As the crew commander looked around to see all was fixed and clear, he instructed the driver to advance. On the road out of the orchard the tanks crawled. They were once more away to support the infantry in another dawn attack on the road to victory.'

*

*

*

The Allied Armies in the west had now reached the stage when a pause was necessary due to administrative difficulties. The Normandy beaches had been the only source of supply for the British Army until DIEPPE was opened on the 8th of September. Railways, and particularly the bridges, required time for repairs after the terrific hammering they had had from the air, and locomotives and rolling stock were very short. The result was that the whole administrative service of transport and supply was stretched to the limit and further advance, on a major scale, had to be postponed until the port of ANTWERP could be opened up. Fortunately this magnificent port had been captured almost intact.

During this period, R.H.Q. moved from OOSTERHOOT to WEURT, south of the WAAL, from WEURT to DEKKERSWALT and then back again across the WAAL to OOSTERHOOT. Squadrons found themselves alternating between periods of rest and operations in defensive support rôles with different units and formations.

On the 2nd of October, Lieutenant Townsend Green was most unfortunately killed by a direct hit on an infantry Regimental Aid Post near DRIEL.

On the 7th of October, Lieutenant-Colonel Dunkerly was evacuated to England and admitted into hospital for treatment on his wrist, which had been seriously damaged in a tank. Major The Earl of Feversham assumed command, and was shortly afterwards promoted to the acting rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Major Rugge-Price came in again as 2nd-in-Command and Captain Stancomb replaced him in command of 'B' Squadron.

It is of interest to record that all three Squadrons came under command of Paratroop Regiments of the 101st and 82nd United States Airborne Divisions for a few days on the 'Island'. It was their first direct introduction to their American Allies and it could not have been a happier association.

October the 21st to November the 8th was spent between WINNSEN and MOLENHOEK with parties taking turns in rest camps at LOUVAIN and ANTWERP. A Brigade concert party was formed in which several men of the Regiment took part, and football and other recreations were extensively organized.

Balaclava Day was celebrated at WINNSEN in the traditional manner with the officers' and serjeants' hockey match and a dance held at NIJMEGEN, attended by some three hundred Dutch girls who danced for the first time since 1940.

*

*

*

MAP 9 The Regiment was now under command of the 43rd Division and, on the 9th of November, moved on tank transporters to BRUNSUM on the Dutch/German frontier, crossing the MEUSE at BERG. It was a long and bitterly cold journey through snow and rain along roads which were very congested.

At 3.30 a.m. on the 12th, the Regiment crossed into Germany in relief of the 407th Regimental Combat Team

Regiment of the 102nd United States Division, in the GEILENKIRCHEN sector of the Siegfried Line. Here the Americans had been holding a bridgehead in the triangle formed between the RIVERS ROER and MEUSE, with the town of ROERMOND at the apex still held by the enemy. The area consisted of low-lying marsh land, arable and grass fields, and many woods and orchards; in winter it promised trouble for tanks. But the Allied Higher Command were determined that the Germans should be given no respite, and the Ninth United States Army, with 30 British Corps under command, was to launch an offensive towards DUREN, JULICH, LINNICH and ROERMOND.

The 30 Corps plan was to encircle GEILENKIRCHEN with an attack from the north-west by the 43rd Division and an attack from the south-east by the 84th United States Division, which was under the British Corps. The latter was to capture GEILENKIRCHEN, whilst the former were to exploit to the high ground south of HEINSBERG. Each phase of the attack was to be supported by the full weight of the Corps Artillery and Royal Air Force rocket-firing Typhoons. The 9th United States Army started its attack on the 16th of November and two days later 30 Corps joined the battle.

When the Regiment arrived it was placed in support of the 129th Infantry Brigade (43rd Division); 'A' Squadron with the 5th Wiltshire Regiment at STAHE, 'B' Squadron with the 4th Wiltshire Regiment at GILRATH, and 'C' Squadron with the 4th Somerset Light Infantry at TEVEREN, whilst R.H.Q. was at NIEDERBRUCH. The general line appeared to be very loosely held and the three Squadrons were spread out with the enemy close over the brow of the hill to the north. There were still German civilians in the villages who worked in the fields during the day. They were soon removed, however, and the Regiment settled down under appalling conditions of weather to prepare for the slogging match which was to capture

GEILENKIRCHEN - BAUCHEM - HATTERATH and the woods to the north.

It was during these operations that all ranks learned how to make themselves comfortable in the ample German cellars, when not actually fighting, and where enormous quantities of bottled food were found stored by the Boche. The 13th to the 17th were spent in patrolling, 'recces' and registration of targets.

The attack on this part of the front started at 3.30 on the afternoon of the 18th. Progress was slow and several tanks were bogged in the marshy ground, but by evening the 43rd Division and the 8th Armoured Brigade had reached all their objectives and had captured HOCHHEID, RICHSDEN, TRIPSRATH, BAUCHEM and NIEDERHEIDE. Over three hundred prisoners were captured with very light casualties. 84th United States Division had also reached all its objectives on the east bank of the RIVER WURM.

On the next day things did not go so well. 'B' Squadron, which was in support of the 5th Wiltshire Regiment (130th Infantry Brigade) found the going for tanks very bad, and many became bogged as soon as they deployed off the roads. Opposition was strong and heavy mortaring and shelling from S.Ps. was encountered. The infantry made practically no progress beyond the start line and, by dark, were still pinned down by heavy fire. They therefore consolidated what ground they had gained and anti-tank guns were brought up. 'B' Squadron was relieved and returned to GILRATH. The remainder of the Regiment did not go into action but R.H.Q. endured heavy shelling in NIEDERBRUCH.

On the 20th the attack was renewed, this time with success. The infantry suffered few casualties and 'B' Squadron only lost one tank blown up on mines and another hit by a heavy shell. By 1 p.m. all objectives were gained. The expected attacks by 'A' and 'C' Squadrons, however, were again postponed due to various reliefs which had taken place during the night.

On the evening of the 21st, 'A' Squadron was at STAHE with the 5th Wiltshire Regiment, 'C' Squadron with the 4th Dorsetshire Regiment (which had relieved 5th Dorset), and 'B' Squadron which was with the 5th Dorsetshire Regiment in reserve.

30 Corps continued to make progress on the following two days, but the Regiment did not become engaged with the exception of 'B' Squadron which carried out an indirect shoot as a diversion to an attack by the 214th Infantry Brigade. The 24th found the Regiment with 'A' Squadron at HOCHHEID in support of the 4th Wiltshire Regiment, 'C' Squadron at NIEDERHEIDE in support of the 5th Wiltshire Regiment, 'B' Squadron at BAUCHEM in support of the 4th Somerset Light Infantry, and R.H.Q. in GEILENKIRCHEN with the Command Post of H.Q. 129th Infantry Brigade.

In spite of continuous heavy shelling the situation became generally stabilized, and the Regiment supported their infantry in a successful counter-attack on the 26th, which drove back some enemy of the 10th S.S. Panzers who had infiltrated into TRIPSRAH. Fifty prisoners were taken.

On the 30th of November, Field-Marshal Montgomery visited the area and held an investiture at which he presented immediate awards to officers and men of the Regiment.¹ The next day the Commander-in-Chief visited H.Q. 8th Armoured Brigade, and the Commanding Officer, and one officer representing each squadron, were introduced.

On the 3rd of December, the 147th Regiment Royal Armoured Corps arrived to relieve the Regiment, which moved back to rest at ULESTRATEN. There it remained for nearly three weeks, training, planning, refitting and getting what games and amusements were to be found but these did not amount to very much. It was at this time that news arrived of the German attack in the

¹ See Appendix VII – Honours and Awards.

ARDENNES which had broken out on the 16th. It was a bold plan and the enemy's last effort at a major offensive in the west. It was the German intention, after stabilizing their front on the MEUSE, to turn north towards ANTWERP with the object of splitting the Allies and depriving them of that port.

Early news was disquieting, and the Regiment was allotted a rôle in the close defence of MAASTRICHT against possible paratroop landings. But a few days later it moved to SCHINVELD and afterwards to SCHINNEN, under command of the 52nd (Lowland) Division, to meet any situation which might develop in that area.

Christmas Day was spent in acute discomfort awaiting an enemy attack which never materialized, but New Year's Day was declared a holiday instead, and only 'A' and 'C' Squadrons had to 'stand to' at dawn and dusk. On the same day the first leave party left for England.

The Regiment was now under 12 Corps (Lieutenant-General N. M. Ritchie¹), 30 Corps having moved south to help deal with the enemy break-through in the ARDENNES. The Corps Commander paid a visit to the Regiment, inspected the training, and had lunch at R.H.Q. mess. He expressed satisfaction at all he saw. Time was mostly spent in 'standing to' and tank firing practice until the 12th of January, when the Regiment concentrated again at ULESTRATEN to plan, what turned out to be, a most unpleasant operation known as 'BLACKCOCK'.

Just before the main party arrived, two V.1 flying bombs landed on the rear of 'C' Squadron cook-house. Fortunately no serious damage was done, but Corporal Price and Trooper Allan, the cooks, were slightly injured.

The object of the coming operation was to clear the enemy from the country west of the RIVER ROER, and the Regiment was placed under command of the 7th

¹ Later Lieutenant-General Sir Neil Ritchie, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C., who had commanded the 8th Army in the Western Desert, 1941-42.

Armoured Division. It began its advance forward via SITTARD and SUSTEREN at two o'clock on the morning of the 19th. It was bitterly cold with a high wind and driving rain and sleet. The roads were very bad and tanks were constantly bogged. This turned out to be a very hard-hitting tank round in which each Squadron in turn took some heavy blows and hit back equally hard.

In the course of the first morning, 'A' Squadron had four tanks knocked out, one other tank killed and three wounded, all hit by S.Ps., three in a matter of a few seconds. The knocked-out tanks blocked the road, and further advance became impossible owing to the boggy state of the ground on either side which prevented movement off the road. 'B' Squadron, therefore, returned to the SITTARD area to move again the following evening by another route to KONINGSBOSCH. The next morning found them entering the little village of WALDEFEUCHT just as a German counter-attack was launched against men of the 52nd Division who had captured the place the day before. 'B' Squadron knocked out two tanks with 17-pounder fire, but themselves lost nine tanks. The village, however, was eventually cleared of enemy after a very hard battle, and the Squadron withdrew to KONINGSBOSCH on the 23rd. Much of this fighting was very confused as it must be in snow and mud, amongst ruined houses, mined roads, concealed weapons and lurking tanks.

The following account, by a soldier of the Squadron, gives a good description of this tough fight and the hard knocks which tanks of 'B' Squadron gave and took in the little village of WALDEFEUCHT.

'The stage was set with the capture by the 5th King's Own Scottish Borderers, at very little cost, of the small town of WALDEFEUCHT just before midnight on January 20th. 'B' Squadron, led by Major Stancomb, left the village of KONINGSBOSCH one and a half miles away, where it had spent half the night. We all thought we were on a normal, rather dull, supporting operation.

'The ground was three inches deep in freshly fallen snow and the Squadron advanced across open country in almost complete darkness. Captain Neave, 2nd-in-Command of the Squadron, had lost his tank during the night to a very unlucky direct hit from a distant gun. Approximately halfway we ran into a heavy 'stonk' from mortars, guns and S.Ps. firing solid shot from our left flank. The different tank troops, who were to join infantry companies in separate quarters of the town, now split up and began their several tasks in the dark. Lieutenant Moulding, 2nd Troop Leader, ran his tank over a complete box of Hawkins anti-tank grenades and became immobile. His remaining two tanks were ordered to join the 3rd and 4th Troops.

'From this point onwards it will be easier to describe the individual troop actions.

'Lieutenant Aitchison and the 1st Troop went to the western end of the village. As his troop was moving into position, three enemy Tiger tanks loomed up out of the mist about one hundred yards away. Two of them were immediately hit by the infantry 6-pounder anti-tank guns and 'brewed up', but Lieutenant Aitchison's tank and two more of his troop received hits and were destroyed. Lieutenant Aitchison returned to Squadron Headquarters on foot, only consoled by the sight of his enemy destroyed at fifty yards range.

'A third Tiger was hit, and yet another shortly afterwards by the infantry 6-pounder anti-tank guns and Corporal Weston's tank.

'The 3rd Troop under Lieutenant Franks went into the town square and then turning south-east attempted to take up its positions. Here a dramatic event occurred. The enemy infantry had infiltrated into the surrounding houses and were at close quarters with our own troops. Two Tiger tanks were supporting them and, after a very bitter battle, a tank of the 3rd Troop was destroyed by a direct hit from one of them. The remaining Shermans were knocked out by German infantry firing 'Panzer-

fausts' from the top floors of the houses. The survivors of the troop had a very hard time finding their way back to our own lines, some being taken prisoner by the Boche.

'The 4th Troop under Lieutenant Denny also went into the square and turned north-east holding the perimeter of the square. The situation here was no better and, during the morning, became considerably worse. The enemy was trying desperately to recapture WALDEFEUCHT and, at 9 a.m., their main attack was put in. This was from the north and east so that the 4th Troop found themselves very heavily engaged. The enemy infiltrated through the houses and eventually surrounded the square. They attempted to get a Tiger tank into the square, but it was unable to get through the narrow street. Casualties were inflicted on both sides and the fighting was bitter and furious. The enemy knocked out two of our tanks with 'Panzerfausts' and damaged a third while snipers killed one crew commander who had fought very bravely. The position became so untenable that the Squadron Leader decided that the two remaining tanks should run the gauntlet rather than be swamped by the enemy infantry. The climax came with a dash back through the town to our own lines. With guns blazing and an incredible amount of smoke and noise, the two tanks tore through the town amid a hail of enemy small arms fire and hastily fired 'Panzerfausts'. Luck was with them and they reached their new position without further loss.

'By approximately mid-day the enemy had crept forward through three-quarters of the town, and were trying hard to throw us out of the last quarter. But it was of no avail. With Squadron H.Q. Troop as the centre, the remaining tanks of the Squadron rallied round and kept the enemy at bay. By evening, the enemy realised they had lost and began to withdraw. By midnight, the situation was restored, and, although we were shelled throughout the night, we were not again attacked.

'It is fitting to end this article with a few words of

praise for Squadron H.Q. Throughout the whole of the battle Major Stancomb, assisted by Captain Neave, directed the Squadron magnificently in most trying circumstances, and it was largely due to them that we held out until reinforcements made it possible for us to clear the town.'

This action affords a brilliant example of good leadership, fine teamwork and gallant individual initiative. The credit so generously given by a member of a tank crew to his officers can be equally well shared amongst all his comrades.

Meanwhile 'C' Squadron on their front ran into stiff resistance shortly after passing the start line on the 19th and lost five tanks from concealed 88mm. guns. Serjeant Driver was killed, but not before he knocked out one S.P. and one tank: Serjeant Miller claimed one S.P. and Serjeant Smith another. Trooper Mason was killed and Lieutenant E. Smith and three other ranks wounded.

At last light the battle was broken off and the Squadron rallied, but found the road cut by the enemy behind them. They had, however, five days' rations on the tanks so shared them with their infantry who had nothing at all. They spent a bitterly cold and uncomfortable night together.

On the following morning the Squadron was placed under command of the 7th/9th Royal Scots Fusiliers and ordered to continue the advance. Very little progress was made before they were again held up by well concealed 88mms. and S.Ps. Major Cotter's tank was hit and 'brewed' up, Serjeant Bradley and Trooper Read being killed; Major Cotter himself was untouched. A little later two more tanks were hit but no casualties were incurred. It was quite impossible to get on any further as the country was very open and completely commanded by anti-tank defences. On the following day the Squadron was ordered to support 'B' Squadron at WALDEFEUCHT but, in spite of the hard fight which the latter Squadron had had, 'C'

CLEARING THE WEST BANK OF THE RHINE, FEBRUARY, 1945
Squadron was not called upon to help. On the 25th, 'C' Squadron was required to support the 4th/5th Royal Scots Fusiliers in clearing several villages, but opposition was slight and there were no casualties.

By the 26th, Squadrons were all concentrated at KONINGSBOSCH and operation 'BLACKCOCK' was ended; one of those tough bewildering battles in which the soldier takes some very hard knocks and is left wondering what it was really all about. But there can be no doubt that this was one of those telling blows which enable the knock-out to be delivered several rounds earlier than would have been possible otherwise.

The next few days were spent in rest and maintenance, relieved by visits from a mobile cinema and an E.N.S.A. concert party, before the Regiment moved back to the NIJMEGEN area to plan and prepare for the big operation which was to destroy the German armies west of the Rhine once and for all.

*

*

*

Although the Regiment had entered Germany before at GEILENKIRCHEN, HEINSBERG and WALDEFEUCHT, the main assault across the RHINE by the British Second Army yet remained to be accomplished. 30 Corps had returned from the ARDENNES and had the initial task of clearing the REICHSWALD FOREST and the towns of CLEVE and GOCH, with more than seven divisions under command including the 8th Armoured Brigade. MAP 10

When the Regiment arrived at NIJMEGEN it was under command of the 3rd Canadian Division and found considerable difficulty in finding suitable billets as the town was packed with troops. But Squadrons eventually settled themselves in and R.H.Q. was well set up with Command Post and Orderly Room in a baker's shop. The officers' mess was in a luxuriously furnished flat belonging to the wife of a Dutch plantation manager in the East Indies who had been arrested for collaboration with the Germans. Here nine very comfortable days were spent

planning and preparing for the coming offensive. Leisure hours were occupied playing a large collection of records on an expensive radio-gramophone and dining off a refectory table.

By the 8th of February all was ready and at 5.30 a.m. the attack started with the greatest artillery bombardment of the war. Every type and size of weapon took part and fire continued for five hours. Guns of the 8th Armoured Brigade shot an average of three hundred rounds per gun, and the total weight of metal sent over exceeded that in the preliminary bombardment at ALAMEIN.

In the opening phase of the battle, 'B' and 'C' Squadrons were in support of the Canadians in the capture of ZYFFLICH and WYLER respectively.

'B' Squadron succeeded in getting one troop into ZYFFLICH, but the Germans had broken the main dams in the north and, by the next morning, the floods arrived at the position. They were ordered to evacuate and did so just in time, but had to abandon three tanks which were marooned on a newly-formed island.

'C' Squadron carried out a direct shoot on WYLER at about two thousand yards range, having had a hard job to get their tanks into position owing to the flooded state of the ground. After a shoot of two and a half hours the infantry were seen into the village and the Squadron was then withdrawn to come under command of the 43rd Reconnaissance Regiment for the next phase of the battle.

'A' Squadron, which had been unable to support the 9th Canadian Brigade owing to the floods, was meanwhile 'standing to' at two hours' notice to move with the remainder of the Regiment.

* * *

MAP 10 The next phase, so far as the Regiment was concerned, lasted some three weeks and involved, perhaps, the hardest time of all in the campaign. The German shelling was heavier than had been experienced before and the

opposing troops were parachutists who fought with fanatical bravery to the last.

The Regiment was initially under command of their old friends, the 43rd Division. Their route took them through WYLER - KRANENBURG - NUTTERDEN—the north-east end of the REICHSWALD FOREST—through MATERBORN, south of CLEVE - BEDBURG to GOCH. Early in the morning of the 10th of February, 43rd Division 'Recce' Regiment left NIJMEGEN with 'C' Squadron in support and moved to NUTTERDEN, reaching that place at mid-day after numerous traffic jams. The road was carrying more traffic than it could bear and was in worse condition than ever. Owing to stiff resistance ahead it remained there until the 12th, when patrols were pushed forward to the north-east end of the forest. These moved through MATERBORN and down the GOCH road which was dead straight. They soon met trouble from 88mms., losing three tanks, two other ranks being killed. It was found impossible to proceed so they were ordered to withdraw to MATERBORN, and it was decided to put in a full scale attack on the 15th.

Meanwhile the remainder of the Regiment had moved up to BEDBURG where they occupied the cellars of the school building after turning out a number of German refugees.

The attack was launched on the 15th with the Regiment under command of the 130th Brigade (43rd Division), 'A' Squadron in support of the 7th Hampshire Regiment, 'B' Squadron in support of the 4th Dorsetshire Regiment, and 'C' Squadron the 5th Dorsetshire Regiment. Opposition was stubborn but, by mid-day, the objectives had been gained and consolidated. Heavy shelling was encountered and 'B' Squadron lost one tank from S.P. fire, all the crew except the crew commander, Lieutenant P. Flood, being killed. Three other tanks were destroyed but without casualties to the crews.

In the afternoon, 'A' Squadron passed through 'B' Squadron and advanced a further mile. A thick mist had

descended and visibility was reduced to thirty yards making conditions most unpleasant. The infantry lost their way in the fog and 'A' Squadron took the objective alone. However, the 7th Hampshire Regiment arrived in time and the situation became less nerve-racking. During the advance, 'A' Squadron knocked out an 88mm. S.P. at thirty yards range which suddenly appeared out of the mist. The Squadron lost one tank from a 'bazooka' and another mined. One other tank was killed and one officer and another trooper wounded.

On the 17th the situation was quiet for the Regiment, but the 214th Infantry Brigade and the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards, to the south, were still having a very hard fight. Enemy shelling was most severe and was described as reaching, at times, 'fantastic' intensity. The next day found 'B' Squadron once more in the line supporting the 4th Dorsetshire Regiment in clearing the FOREST OF CLEVE where it was thought some enemy remained. No opposition was encountered and contact was made with men of the 53rd Division who had come in from the east. In the evening 'B' Squadron was again called into the line, this time to support the 4th Wiltshire Regiment of the 214th Brigade which had been counter-attacked on the extreme west flank. The attack was repelled, but 'B' Squadron had to remain in position all night.

The 9th Canadian Brigade now began to arrive to take over this part of the line. 'C' Squadron returned to BEDBURG and 'A' Squadron to MATERBORN. The following morning 'B' Squadron was relieved by the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards and went to HAU. The whole Regiment was now out of the line. The escarpment overlooking GOCH was in British hands, and the town itself had been entered by elements of the 51st (Highland) Division from the west. The battle for GOCH was over. Casualties had been heavy amongst the infantry, and the Regiment was lucky to escape with the loss of some ten tanks, five other ranks killed and three wounded.

After three days spent around BEDBURG for refuelling and maintenance, the Regiment entered GOCH at dusk on the 23rd to concentrate for the next attack on the following day.

For this attack the Regiment came under command of the 16th Brigade (53rd Division), 'A' Squadron on the right in support of the 2nd Monmouthshire Regiment attacking the wood due south of GOCH, 'B' Squadron left in support of the 6th Royal Welch Fusiliers attacking HOST, and 'C' Squadron in reserve in support of the 4th Welch Regiment.

'A' Squadron had the stiffest opposition and, in the course of the day, four tanks were 'brewed up' by S.Ps., three were mined, one was badly bogged in an anti-tank ditch, and one fell into a large bomb crater at the start of the attack. One officer and four other ranks were wounded and three other ranks were killed, but the Squadron reached its objective by the evening, the infantry having suffered heavily.

'C' Squadron passed through 'A' in the evening, but the hard-fought battle of the day had so weakened the enemy that the wood further to the south was taken without any opposition, although there was heavy and continuous shelling. They lost one tank knocked out by 88mms. at GOCH before the attack was launched, Lieutenant Bethell being wounded.

On the left, 'B' Squadron took a large number of prisoners and it was thought that as many were killed. The objective was taken with the loss of only two tanks knocked out by S.Ps., two tanks mined, and one 17-pounder hit by heavy machine gun fire. Three other ranks were wounded.

Except for some severe artillery fire on the wood captured by 'C' Squadron, who remained there throughout the 25th, the next three days passed quietly, whilst Squadrons refitted and replaced tanks. But on the 28th 'C' Squadron became involved in a sharp enemy counter-

attack when it succeeded in killing a number of the enemy. Serjeant Miller's tank was hit but remained in action, and he had his revenge when he knocked out an S.P. and an enemy gun.

On the 4th of March, R.H.Q., with 'A' and 'C' Squadrons, moved to KEVELAER and then on to WEERT just north of GELDERN, leaving 'B' Squadron at HOST to follow on a day behind. Late that night a conference was held with H.Q. 160th Infantry Brigade for a new plan of attack against the escarpment running south-west of ALPON which was to take place early the following morning.

At 4 a.m., 'A' Squadron supporting the 2nd Monmouthshire Regiment followed by the 4th Welch Regiment attacked. It was found that the enemy were one mile inside the start line, but this caused no change of plan and the 2nd Monmouthshire Regiment arrived in the area of their objective after 'A' Squadron had lost three tanks knocked out by S.Ps. at twelve hundred yards range. These S.Ps. appeared to be grouped in threes, and the hits on the tanks were in front, side and back. Another tank became bogged in the trench system and yet another was mined. The Squadron later supported the 4th Welch Regiment in a flanking movement and lost four more tanks from various causes. The Squadron in reply destroyed one 88mm. S.P. The casualties were three other ranks killed, one officer and seven other ranks wounded, but the infantry companies, which it was supporting, suffered very severely and only one serjeant and six other ranks were left on the objective after it had been occupied. When night fell, what was left of the Squadron remained in support of the infantry until relieved by two troops of 'C' Squadron.

The battle was renewed on the 7th and continued throughout the 8th and 9th, 'B' and 'C' Squadrons being fully engaged, whilst 'A' Squadron went into reserve. Although fighting was severe and the infantry suffered

considerably, the Regiment was fortunate in getting off lightly. Enemy resistance now seemed to be weakening and, by the 9th, the Regiment had fought their way on to the top of the escarpment looking down on the RHINE VALLEY. There the Americans could be seen coming in from the south and the Guards Armoured Division from the north. Suddenly it was realised that the enemy had gone and the remnants of the German Army were either dead, prisoners, or east of the RHINE. By the 10th, the Regiment had been relieved by the 34th Tank Brigade and had returned to ISSUM, where, on the following day, a church service attended by all ranks was held.

*

*

*

On the 12th of March, the Regiment moved back to GOCH via GELDEREN and WEEZE to refit, rest and plan for the coming crossing of the RHINE. They were joined by A.1 and A.2 Echelons together with the Regimental Band, which had just arrived from England. Unfortunately that evening an M.E.262 aircraft dropped a canister of armour-piercing bombs on the road opposite R.H.Q. just as a number of men were returning from tea. One of the bombs landed in the middle of them, killing seven and wounding twenty-eight. Later the same evening there was some heavy calibre shelling from the north bank of the RHINE. One shell, which fell in the rear of a house occupied by 'B' Squadron, caused the cellar to collapse killing one other rank and wounding four.

The next ten days were spent at GOCH planning and refitting for the RHINE crossing. On the 20th the Regiment entertained Major-General G. I. Thomas,¹ commanding the 43rd (Wessex) Division, along with whose gallant men the Regiment had fought so many battles together. On the 21st there was a full regimental parade and a march past through the streets of GOCH, the band playing the old regimental march and the Brigadier taking the salute.

¹ Later Lieutenant-General G. I. Thomas, C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

By the 22nd all plans were completed and, the following day, the Regiment moved towards the RHINE, 'A' and 'C' Squadrons to the area of WISSEL and 'B' Squadron to the south of NORNTER. The United States 3rd and 1st Armies had already crossed, the former south of MAINZ and the latter at REMAGEN. The British 2nd Army, now consisting of the 2nd Canadian Corps and the 8, 12 and 30 Corps, was ready to force a crossing between WESEL and EMME-RICH. On the right was the 9th United States Army and on the left the 1st Canadian Army.

At 5 p.m. on the 23rd of March, the air and artillery bombardment opened and at nine o'clock in the evening the leading elements of the 51st Division were launched in assault craft just north of REES. On the following morning forty thousand airborne troops were watched by the Regiment as they passed overhead in perfect order to land east of the RHINE, making contact with the infantry in the bridgehead.

The Regiment was to follow up in support of the 130th Brigade on the left of 30 Corps front, 51st Division being on their immediate right and 9th Canadian Brigade on their left. The approach to the river was a slow process. There were many delays and changes of plan. The routes were difficult to negotiate with the tanks, which were purposely kept off the roads owing to the immense amount of traffic which would have to use them later. It was during one of these halts that the Regiment heard on the B.B.C. news that the Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, had already been over the RHINE on the Corps front. The news spread quickly round the troops, who were delighted, thinking, no doubt, that if it was all right for the Prime Minister of England it would be all right for them on the far side.

'C' Squadron commenced to cross at four o'clock on the morning of the 25th, and all were completely over by 10 a.m. on the 26th. 'B' and 'A' Squadrons were over by mid-day and R.H.Q., after many delays, followed. But

the last vehicles did not reach the far bank till after dark, crossing over the Class 15 bridge which had been erected in record time just west of REES.

The bridgehead continued to expand, 'A' and 'B' Squadrons supporting the 7th Hampshire Regiment and the 5th Dorsetshire Regiment respectively in an attack on MILLENGEN along the line of the main railway running to the south-east. The attack was successful and some two hundred prisoners were captured. Our men pushed steadily forward through ANHOLT to SINDEREN where they were ready to exploit the break-out on the 31st.

MAP 11

The Regiment now came under command of the 214th Brigade (43rd Division) forming part of an armoured column leading the left of the advance. Their first objective was the capture of a crossing over the canal at GOOR, but this failed as the enemy blew the bridge when the leading tank of 'C' Squadron was within fifteen yards of it. This caused some delay, and the Regiment remained in the area of DIEPENHEIM and NEEDE until the 3rd, when they moved to the south of HENGEL where a crossing had been effected to the east. On the night of the 6th of April, the Regiment reached NORDHORN, moving to LINGEN the following day, where some stiff fighting had taken place, before crossings over the RIVER EMS and the DORTMUND/EMS CANAL could be effected.

The Regiment was now off again and crossed the bridge at LINGEN that evening. From there on the advance was slow owing to numerous reports from prisoners and civilians that the woods ahead were full of S.P.s., 'bazookas' and 20mm. guns. It was therefore decided that 'A' Squadron, carrying the 7th Somerset Light Infantry on their tanks and supported by 'B' Company 12th/60th King's Royal Rifle Corps, should make a charge up the road preceded by a ten-minute barrage. This modern version of a cavalry charge was highly successful and the objective was reached. 'A' Squadron remained on it for the night whilst the remainder of the Regiment

leaguered on the verges of the road about two miles in rear.

On the following day, BAWINKEL was captured and the Regiment stayed there until the 12th for rest and maintenance before it moved to HASELUNNE to rejoin the 214th Brigade, Squadrons being allotted in support of Battalions.

A plan had now to be made for the capture of CLOPPENBURG and AHLHORN; the 130th Brigade was to be in the lead for the attack on the former, whilst the 214th Brigade was to pass through to attack the latter. 'C' Squadron with the 1st Worcestershire Regiment moved forward as advance guard on the 14th, but, when some two thousand yards from the river south of AHLHORN, the bridge was blown. An alternative crossing, however, was soon found a short distance to the south and a bridgehead was successfully established. Early on the 15th the enemy put in a sharp counter-attack which at first met with some success, one 'C' Squadron tank being hit by a 'bazooka', and the Worcestershire Regiment suffering casualties, but the situation was soon restored and heavy casualties were inflicted upon the enemy.

Further fighting took place before AHLHORN and the woods to the north could be cleared, but the advance continued, slowly but surely, until the 21st found the Regiment in DELMENHORST after a fierce battle in the northern suburbs of the town in which 'B' Squadron had a tank hit by an S.P. and suffered a few casualties. The Regiment continued fighting step by step through the southern outskirts of BREMEN, crossing the WESER on the afternoon of the 23rd, where Lieutenant Moulding, 'B' Squadron, died of wounds as a result of a direct hit on his tank by an S.P.

It was at this time that Major D. B. Wormald left the Regiment to take command of the 25th Dragoons in India. He had commanded 'A' Squadron with particular distinction for two and a half years and served in it

continuously during the whole of his soldiering career. He had been awarded the M.C. for gallantry in Belgium in 1940, a Bar to the M.C. and the D.S.O. for further acts of gallantry and distinguished service in Normandy and France in 1944/45.

Early on the 27th all resistance in BREMEN came to an end, and the Regiment was concentrated in the town for two days before moving to QUELKHORN in support of 214th Brigade, who were engaged in clearing up the area. On the 2nd of May armoured support was no longer considered necessary for this purpose and the Regiment was placed under command of the 129th Brigade to operate towards BREMERHAVEN, from the south-east, but on the 4th this operation was cancelled since all German forces opposite 21st Army Group had surrendered.

Although the foregoing narrative only briefly describes the actions which were fought, it must not be thought that the going was easy. There was never the slightest doubt in the minds of anyone that the German was beaten and that his end was near, but there were always stout-hearted enemy ready to defend and even counter-attack each successive bound, and the well concealed S.P. and 88mm. guns were as ready as ever to give a knockout blow to the over-rash or unwary tank. All ranks of the Regiment, however, had by this time learned their lessons on many hard fought battlefields and knew how to combine confidence with proper caution, and dash with sound discretion, thus avoiding many unnecessary casualties. In other words, the Regiment was now vastly experienced and supremely expert at its job.

At 10 a.m. on the 7th of May, the Regiment moved to an area 15 miles east of BREMEN to come under command of the 52nd Division and assist in organizing the surrender of the 480th Division and the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division. At 6 p.m. on the same day news was received of the unconditional surrender of the Germans in Europe.

THE WINTER CAMPAIGN AND LAST ROUND

V.E. Day¹ was declared on the 8th of May and the war with Germany was at an end.

*

*

*

In the despatch submitted to the Secretary of State for War on the 1st of June, 1946, Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery states:—

‘The Royal Armoured Corps lived up to its highest traditions in this Campaign,’ and in his concluding paragraph he writes:—‘I wish to pay a tribute to the splendid fighting spirit, heroism and endurance of the ordinary soldier. And if I were asked what is the greatest single factor which contributed to his success, I would say Morale. I call morale the greatest single factor in war. A high morale is based on discipline, self-respect and confidence of the soldiers in his commanders, in his weapons, and in himself.’

May the officers and men of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Q.M.O.) never forget the final words of their great Commander-in-Chief.

¹ The Day of Victory in Europe.

Chapter 9

WITH THE BRITISH ARMY OF THE RHINE, 1945-1947

LIFE IN OCCUPIED GERMANY - HANOVER - V.J. DAY
VIENENBERG - IMMENDORF - WOLFENBUTTEL - RETURN TO
ENGLAND

THE fighting was over, and the Allied Armies were now faced with the stupendous problems involved in the administration of a defeated and demoralized nation and the occupation of a devastated land. Those who had thought about the matter during the latter months of the war were under no delusion as to the state in which Europe would be found after seven years of organized destruction, and the magnitude of the economic difficulties which would have to be solved. All ranks of the Army were confronted with the appalling effects of air bombardment upon towns, industries and communications; the hoards of refugees without food or houses; the unbelievable horrors of the Nazi death camps, and the tens of thousands of listless prisoners-of-war. But this history is not the place to describe defeated Germany or the organisation which the Western Powers set up in their attempt to administer and rehabilitate the country.

The first task of the Army in Germany was to receive the capitulation of the enemy forces and establish a Military Administration for civil affairs as soon as possible.

As it was after the First World War, so victory in Europe did not bring to an end the tasks demanded of the British soldier overseas. The Japanese had not yet been brought to their knees. There were those in Palestine and Egypt who were ready to turn upon their British deliverers

instead of showing gratitude for their rescue from slavery and worse. North Africa, Italy and many other countries besides Germany needed the presence of the British soldier to maintain law and order and clear up the aftermath of war. There were grumbles and a few serious cases of breach of discipline, but the British soldier has a way of bearing his troubles with cheerfulness and patience provided he can be reconciled to the traditions and discipline of his regiment.

A Lance-Corporal in the 13th/18th Hussars wrote at this time some remarkable words which reflect the sentiments of the men bound together by regimental ties:—

‘We of this Regiment can be proud of the part we have played in defeating Fascism. We have worthily upheld the traditions of our Regiment and have carved new notches on its stick for posterity to see. We have found that the traditions of the past can be harnessed to the forces of the present to secure the future. We know that, wisely understood, tradition is not a mill-stone round the neck of today and tomorrow. On the contrary, it can be an incentive to decisive action.’

*

*

*

On V.E. Day the Regiment, with ‘A’ Squadron in support of the 157th Brigade and ‘B’ and ‘C’ Squadrons supporting the 155th Brigade of the 52nd (Lowland) Division, moved through BREMEN to the area of HULSEBERG to organise the surrender of the German Ems Corps between the RIVERS ELBE and WESER; ‘C’ Squadron moved with the 6th Highland Light Infantry ‘Recce’ Party to take over accommodation in the concentration area of the German 480th Division and as a show of force.

Capitulation went according to plan and there were no untoward incidents. The Regiment remained in the northern area until the 19th of May when orders were received to move to HANOVER where it arrived the following day having reverted to the command of its old Brigade, the 8th Armoured. ‘C’ Squadron took over the

guards and duties from the 3rd Battalion 334th Regiment, 84th United States Division, with the additional task of patrolling and checking displaced persons (D.Ps.), and others, after curfew.

On the 31st of May, the Corps Commander, Lieutenant-General Sir Brian Horrocks, visited the area and gave a lecture to representatives of all units, explaining their duties and responsibilities in the Army of Occupation. He afterwards decorated¹ officers and men of the Regiment for gallantry in action and distinguished services in the field. A Guard of Honour was provided by the Regiment and consisted of a guard troop of two tanks, one from 'A' Squadron, and one from Regimental Headquarters.

On the 12th of June, 1945, Lieutenant-Colonel The Earl of Feversham left the Regiment to take up other duties in England, and Lieutenant-Colonel Dunkerly resumed command.

The Regiment soon settled down to its new tasks of guards and internal security duties. Sports, games and other forms of recreation were quickly organised and a certain number of German horses were allotted which enabled a riding school and mounted sports to be started again. The Herrenhausen Theatre in HANOVER was opened for opera and concerts owing to the energy and enthusiasm of Captain Coates, and there was no lack of good canteens and clubs, some run by the Regiment and others by Toc H, the Y.M.C.A., and the other great voluntary bodies which had given such valuable welfare service to the Army throughout the war.

Naturally the thoughts of the majority were turned towards the day when they could be released from service and return home to resume their civil jobs, or make a new start in life. But the release scheme could not come into full operation until the war with Japan was over. By this scheme, officers and men alike were to be released by groups, according to their age and service wherever

¹ See Appendix VII—Honours and Awards.

located; only in very special circumstances could exceptional cases be considered for earlier release. The scheme was universally accepted as fair to all, and, on the whole, it worked smoothly. The first man to be released from the Regiment left on the 27th of June, 1945; others followed later in their groups as the general situation throughout the world permitted.

At midnight on the 14th of August, 1945, news was received that the Japanese war had ended and V.J. Day¹ was celebrated as a holiday on the 17th and 18th of August with a Thanksgiving Service in HANOVER.

* * *

On the 18th of October, the Regiment moved to the BRUNSWICK area, R.H.Q. going to a large communal farm at WOLTINGRODE, 'A' and 'B' Squadrons to VIENENBERG, and 'C' Squadron to BAD HARZBURG. It was now to be reorganised as the Divisional Cavalry Regiment of the 5th Infantry Division (Major-General R. A. Hull²) with the same rôle which it had fulfilled at the outbreak of war in 1939 under the 1st Division.

This meant leaving the command of Brigadier G. E. Prior-Palmer under whom it had trained and fought for over three years both in the 27th and 8th Armoured Brigades. The Brigadier had proved himself a gallant and expert commander of armoured forces, and he and his staff had always done everything possible to help the Regiment. All ranks were very sorry when the day came to take down the 'Fox's Mask' from their shoulders. As Lieutenant-General Sir Brian Horrocks has said in his foreword to the history of the 8th Armoured Brigade:—

'If you want to know what the infantry soldier thought of the 'Fox' you have only to ask the men of such famous divisions as the 43rd (Wessex), 51st (Highland) or 50th (Northumberland) and I have no

¹ The Day of Victory in the war against Japan.

² Major-General R. A. Hull, C.B., D.S.O., later Commandant, The Staff College, Camberley.

doubt as to the favourable and enthusiastic answer you would get.'

Time and again throughout the Campaign the men of the Regiment had fought in close co-operation with infantry. Only on one or two rare occasions did they fight in an independent armoured rôle. In the assault, they covered ashore the men of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Suffolk in the 3rd Division and helped them to reach their objectives inland. They gave timely assistance to the paratroopers of the 6th Airborne Division east of the ORNE, and then supported the Highlanders of the 51st Division in many fights around LE MESNIL, ESCOVILLE and ST. HONORINE. They joined the 59th Division in the attack on CAEN and the 50th (Northumberland) Division and the 43rd (Wessex) Division in the battles which ended in the capture of MONT PINCON. They were to get to know the battalions of the 43rd very well during the many fights of the hard winter campaign along the German/Dutch frontier. These battalions were composed of men from the West Country—from the Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorsetshire Regiments, and from the Somerset Light Infantry and Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

The Royal Scots Fusiliers and King's Own Scottish Borderers of the 52nd (Lowland) Division were with 'B' Squadron at WALDEFEUCHT during that grim fight in the snow on the 21st of January, 1945, and it was the Welshmen of the 53rd (Welch) Division who fought their way, with heavy casualties, on to the ALPON escarpment supported by all three Squadrons of the Regiment in turn.

To this long list of British units must be added those of the 1st and 3rd Canadian Divisions which were supported by 'B' and 'C' Squadrons into ZYFFLICH and WYLER in the opening phase of the operation which finally wiped out the German from the west bank of the RHINE.

Perfect co-operation on the battlefield was not easily achieved; there were occasions when tanks were allotted quite unsuitable tasks or were frittered away uselessly in

penny packets. Maybe there were other times when the support given might have been better. But incidents such as these were confined to very early days, and as experience, mutual understanding, and training improved, so they disappeared to be replaced by almost perfect teamwork.

The second World War was remarkable for the unity achieved. Unity of purpose and in execution was not confined to all arms on the battlefield, but was to be found in the combined operations of all three Fighting Services—in the joint work between soldier and civilian and at the highest levels of Allied military and political direction.

The ships' companies of the Royal Navy, the regiments of the Army, and the air crews of the Royal Air Force have all shown what great things can be achieved and what dangers can be surmounted by teamwork, comradeship, and, when need be, by self-sacrifice. Is it not possible for all men to learn from them how to work unselfishly together in the struggle for peace and prosperity?

The Sherman tanks which were now to be discarded were old and trusted friends and had carried the Regiment many a mile in training and in battle. Officers and men were very reluctant to part with them. The new equipment consisted of armoured cars and carriers, but the latter were later changed to a new type of light tank known as the 'Chaffee'.

*

*

*

The time passed quickly and on the whole pleasantly with fairly generous leave to Great Britain, Brussels, and other places on the Continent. Routine training was varied by patrols along the Russian boundary to control refugees and smuggling, and by wood-cutting for the timber so badly needed in England.

There was plenty of sport to be had. The Regiment opened a ski-ing chalet at TORFHAUS in the HARZ MOUNTAINS, and 30 Corps winter sports centre at ALTENAU was very popular with all ranks, some of whom became expert

in winter sports. There was also shooting to be had: game birds, rabbits, hares, wild pig and deer were fairly plentiful and many happy days were spent by officers and other ranks in pursuit of them.

The first Balaclava Day after the end of the war was celebrated at VIENENBERG by the usual officers' and serjeants' hockey match and squadron dances in the evening. Very strict orders were at first issued with regard to fraternisation by the troops with the German inhabitants, but, as time went on, these were somewhat relaxed and German girls were allowed to attend the dances and other entertainments. The first Christmas Day after the war was also kept in the traditional manner and it was reported that the dinners were bigger than ever and much appreciated.

On the 11th of April, 1946, the Regiment moved to IMMENDORF, but moved again, on the 1st of July, to Northampton Barracks at WOLFENBUTTEL. They found a well laid-out German barracks of modern pattern with excellent garages and workshops where all vehicles could be under cover. There were tennis courts, swimming pools, football and hockey grounds. Here the Regiment remained, with very little variation in the routine of life established in Occupied Germany, until its return to England in the autumn of the following year.

A detachment of the Regiment under command of Captain W. G. Denny took part in the Victory March through London, which was held on the 8th of June, 1946. The detachment, consisting of one officer and eleven non-commissioned officers and men, marched with the Royal Armoured Corps column past the saluting base in Whitehall, where His Majesty The King took the Salute accompanied by The Queen, Queen Mary and other Members of the Royal Family. The great political leaders of the Empire were also present: Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Mackenzie King of Canada, Field-Marshal Smuts of South Africa, Field-Marshal Alexander, Alanbrooke and

Wilson, with Lord Louis Mountbatten and others who had won fame during the War.

In June, 1946, a detachment of the Regiment under Major R. E. Norris was sent to BERLIN to relieve the Life Guards Squadron. This detachment was stationed at SPANDAU where they found comfortable and well-appointed quarters. The duties were not arduous and the short spell there was popular. The damage in BERLIN was appalling. There was scarcely a building, even in the suburbs, which did not bear the mark of bombing in some form, and it was difficult to understand how the population were able to exist in such devastation.

In September, 1946, Brigadier J. N. Lumley, the Colonel, paid a visit to the Regiment and stayed a few days. There was a full Regimental parade and march past in his honour, followed by visits to the HARZ MOUNTAINS and LUNEBURG, where the Regiment had several entries in the Rhine Army Horse Show.

The winter of 1946/47 was exceptionally severe throughout Europe, and great hardships were suffered by conquered and conquerors alike in Germany. The country and communications froze up, causing breakdown in the distribution of what little coal there was available, and an irregular supply of electricity resulted. There were threats of food rioting, but the only hostile demonstrations took the form of German youths, probably urged by subversive propaganda, throwing stones at canteens in BRUNSWICK. British troops were not attacked but had to be called out on occasions to disperse the crowds.

On the 13th of January, 1947, Lieutenant-Colonel Dunkerly retired and was succeeded by Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Hermon,¹ who had been promoted from the Royals to command. Lieutenant-Colonel Dunkerly had commanded the Regiment with great distinction and had been given an immediate award of the D.S.O. for gallantry in action at MONT PINCON. The Regiment had

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Hermon, D.S.O., O.B.E.

earned unqualified praise for its fighting qualities throughout the victorious campaign, and the greatest credit is due to the three Commanding Officers—Harrap, Dunkerly and Feversham, who had in turn been in the lead since 1944.

There was still a small but strong contingent of old regular soldiers in the ranks, headed by Regimental-Serjeant-Major A. L. Hind, who had held his very responsible appointment with great efficiency since 1942, having served in the Regiment for 28 years.

The summer of 1947 passed uneventfully for the Regiment in Germany. Non-regular officers and men continued to be discharged in accordance with their age and service groups under the release scheme. There were not sufficient volunteer long service men coming into the Army, and the ranks could only be kept filled by men called up compulsorily for two years under the National Defence Act. The demands for man-power in industry at home and the terrible drain upon the country's economic and financial resources imposed by the war, made it imperative to reduce, drastically, the establishments of the Fighting Services. The greater part of the world, and Western Europe in particular, were suffering acute economic hardship. The people of Great Britain had thrown all they had into winning the war and now found they had to pay a terrible price. Those who had been deluded into thinking that peace would be the millennium were finding such thoughts to be false dreams. Shortages, controls and costs tended to increase rather than diminish, and men and women were beginning to discover that nothing but hard work and perhaps greater hardships lay ahead.

The great Allied Powers who had worked together to win the war had shown almost complete failure to agree in peace, and the settlement of the many problems concerning the future of Germany were still unsolved in the autumn of 1947 when the Regiment received orders to return to England to spend a few months in reorganization before moving to BENGHAZI in North Africa.

Thus it was that on the 23rd of October, 1947, the main body of the Regiment disembarked at HARWICH, and on the same day arrived at ALDERSHOT where the 13th Hussars and the 18th Royal Hussars (Q.M.O.) had amalgamated in 1922.

This brings to an end a quarter of a century of history in the life of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Q.M.O.)—a story of service for King and Country both in peace and war of which the Regiment can be justly proud.

Fate had decreed that the Regiment should take part in the first and last campaigns in Europe in the Second World War of the twentieth century. In the first campaign the Regiment tasted defeat and the horrors of retreat. In the second it experienced overwhelming victory as a magnificently trained and equipped armoured regiment¹ forming part of what was, probably, the finest army which has ever taken the field. Both these campaigns were true tests of leadership, training and morale fortified and sustained by regimental tradition and the courage and endurance of the British people.

The true strength of an Army does not lie in its numbers and weapons alone, but rather in the spiritual and moral qualities of each individual soldier expressed in his adherence to the Christian traditions of truth, fair play, courage and self-discipline: traditions which have been exemplified by the British soldier in the past both in peace and war.

Future generations of the Regiment will be the proud inheritors of these traditions. It will be their great responsibility to uphold and strengthen them, and, if called upon again to fight in the cause of Justice and Freedom, to show the same devotion to duty as has been shown by those who have passed before them through the ranks.

THE END

¹ It is interesting to compare the fire power of the Regiment in 1944 with that in 1940 *vide* Appendices v and vi, and thus to realise how the Allies gathered strength as the war went on.

*‘When we look back over all the mighty foes
we have laid low and all the dirty designs we
have frustrated, why should we fear the future?’*

WINSTON CHURCHILL

Appendix 1

NOMINAL ROLL

of Colonels – Officers Commanding – Quartermasters
Adjutants – Regimental Serjt.-Majors and Bandmasters
of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Q.M.O.)

1922 – 1947

COLONEL-IN-CHIEF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY

COLONELS

Lt.-General The Lord Baden-Powell,
O.M., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.C.L., LL.D. 1911 – 1938
Colonel J. J. Richardson, D.S.O. 1938 – 1942
Brigadier J. N. Lumley, C.B.E., M.C. 1942

OFFICERS COMMANDING

Lt.-Colonel E. F. Twist. 1921 – 1925
Lt.-Colonel W. Holdsworth. 1925 – 1929
Lt.-Colonel J. N. Lumley, M.C. 1929 – 1933
(later Brigadier, C.B.E.)
Lt.-Colonel S. V. Kennedy, M.C. 1933 – 1937
(later Colonel)
Lt.-Colonel C. H. Miller. 1937 – 1939
(later Major-General, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.)
Lt.-Colonel D. A. Stirling. 1939 – 1941
(later Colonel)
Lt.-Colonel R. A. Moulton-Barrett. 1941 – 1944
Lt.-Colonel R. T. G. Harrap. 1944
(killed in action 16.6.44)
Lt.-Colonel V. A. B. Dunkerly, D.S.O. 1944 – 1947
Lt.-Colonel R. A. Hermon, D.S.O., O.B.E. 1947 –
Lt.-Colonel The Earl of Feversham, D.S.O.
16.6.44 – 10.7.44 and again 7.10.44 – 12.6.45

QUARTERMASTERS

Lt.-Colonel and Quartermaster A. G. Ellery. 1914 – 1939
Lieutenant and Quartermaster H. Burder. 1939 – 1942
(later Capt. and Q.M.)
Captain and Quartermaster F. Sweeting. 1942 –

NOMINAL ROLL

ADJUTANTS, 1922-1947

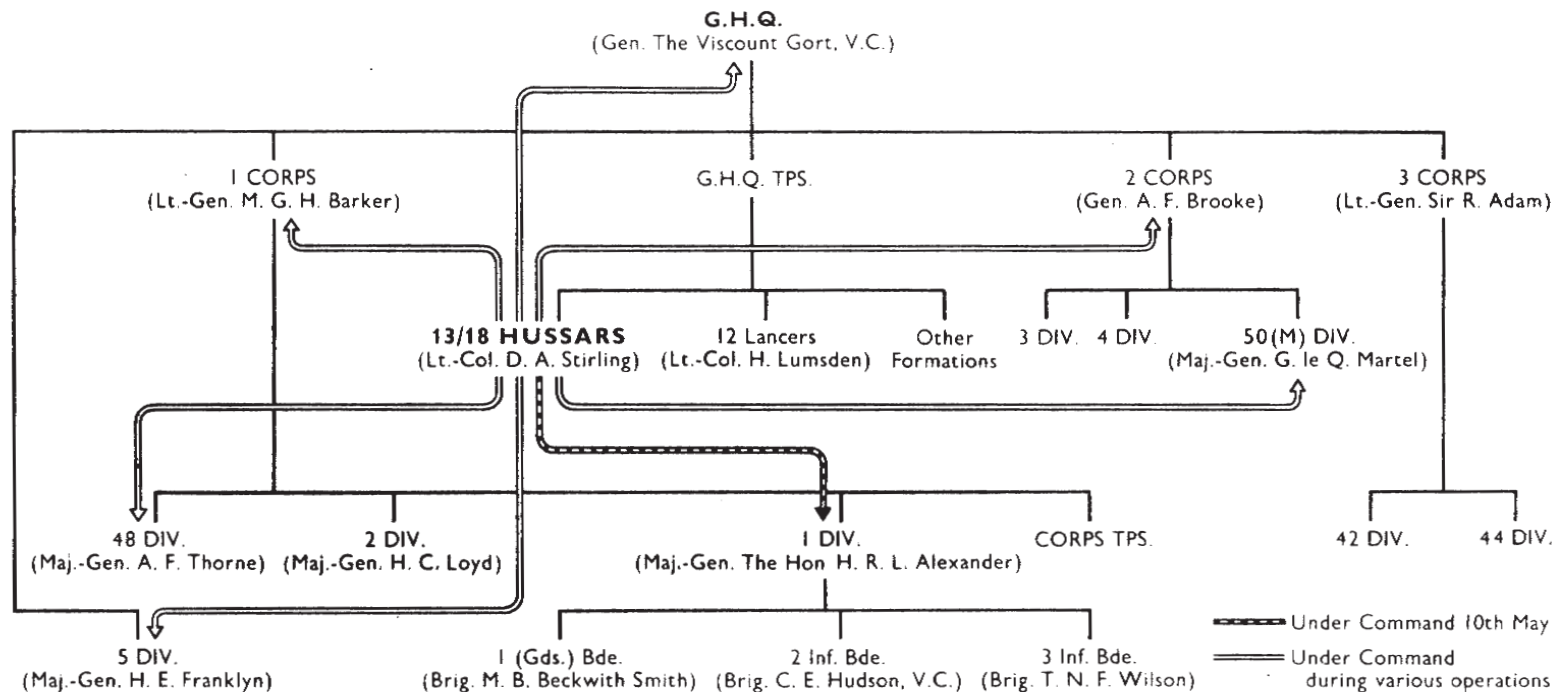
Lieutenant T. Williams-Taylor	Captain R. T. G. Harrap
Lieutenant E. S. Sword	Captain J. A. Stancomb, M.C.
Lieutenant D. O'B. E. French Blake	Captain J. A. S. Neave, M.B.E.
Captain D. A. R. B. Cooke	Captain H. S. R. Watson
Captain R. A. Critchley	Captain J. W. Smith, M.C.
Captain W. G. Shaw, M.C.	

REGIMENTAL-SERJT.-MAJORS

Mr. B. E. Rabjohn, M.C. 1916-1929
Mr. E. Loader. 1929-1935
Mr. H. Burder. 1935-1939
(later Capt. and Quartermaster)
Mr. F. Churchman. 1939-1941
(later Capt. and Quartermaster)
Mr. A. L. Hind. 1941-

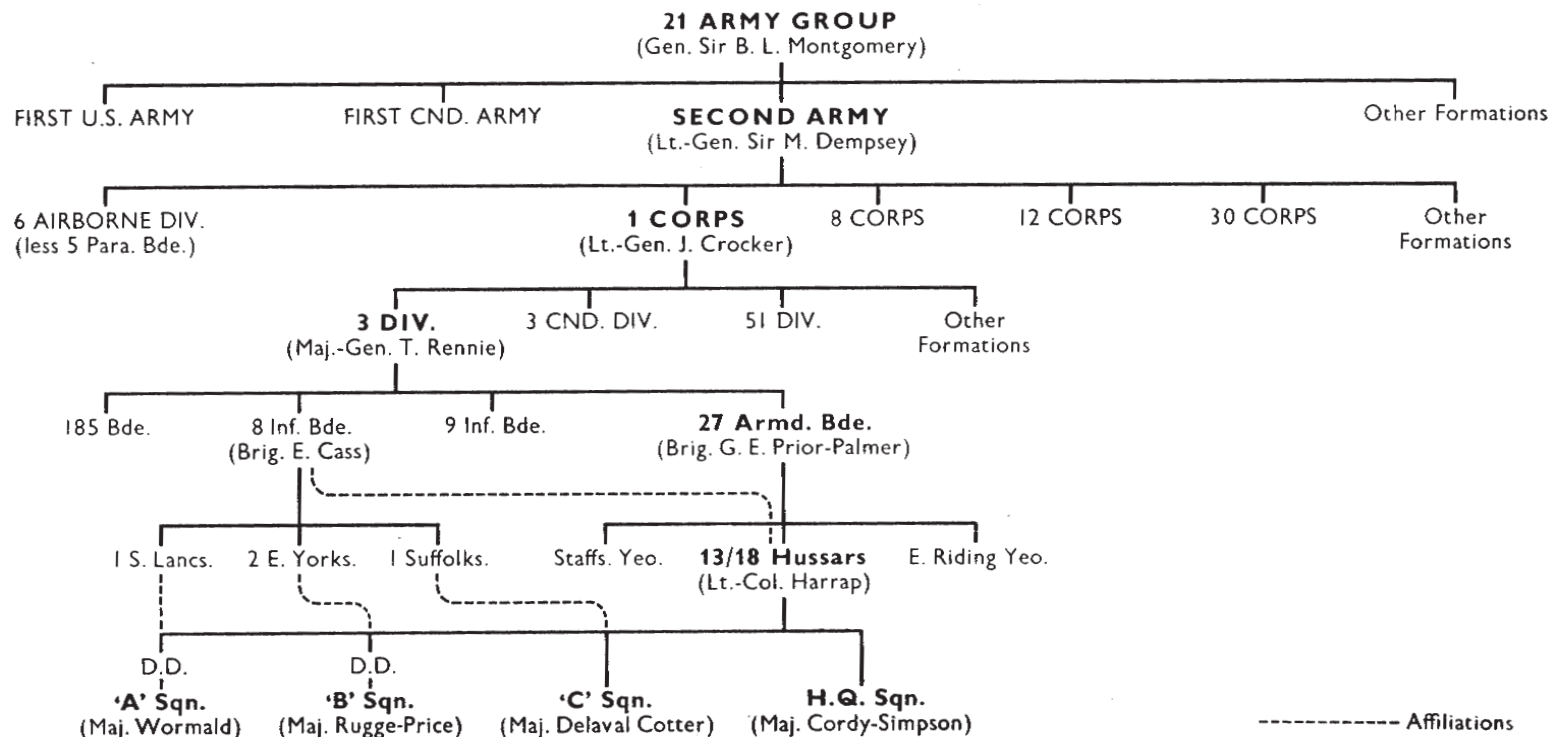
BANDMASTERS

Bandmaster A. E. Hopkins. 1912-1935
Bandmaster A. L. Streeter. 1935-1939
Bandmaster S. T. Vinnicombe. 1939-



Appendix II

Diagram showing the 13th/18th Royal Hussars in the Order of Battle of the British Expeditionary Force on the 10th of May, 1940 and subsequent operations in France and Belgium



Appendix III

Diagram showing the 13th/18th Royal Hussars in the Order of Battle of the 21st Army Group on the 6th of June, 1944

SECTOR	ASSAULT FORMATION	D.D. UNITS	REMARKS
UTAH VII U.S. CORPS	4 Inf. DIV. U.S. with one R.C.T. up	70 Tank Bn.	30 Tanks launched at 3000 yds., 1 foundered.
OMAHA V U.S. CORPS	1 Inf. DIV. U.S. with two R.C.Ts. up	743 Tank Bn. 741 Tank Bn.	NOT launched; all beached direct from L.Cs.T. 29 Tanks launched at 6000 yds: 27 foundered, 2 swam in. 3 Beached from L.Cs.T.
GOLD 30 Brit. CORPS	50 DIV. with two Bde. Gps. up	Notts. Yeo. 4/7 Dgs. (8 Armd. Bde.)	NOT launched; all beached from L.Cs.T. on orders.
JUNO 1 Brit. CORPS	3 Cdn. DIV. with two Bde. Gps. up	6 Cdn. Armd. Rgt. 10 Cdn. Armd. Rgt.	'A' Sqn. launched 10 tanks at 1500-2000 yds., 7 touched down on beach. Another 6 beached from L.Cs.T. 'B' Sqn. launched 19 tanks at 4000 yds. of which 14 reached the shore. NOT launched; all beached from L.Cs.T.
SWORD 1 Brit. CORPS	3 DIV. with one Bde. Gp. up	13/18 H. (27 Armd. Bde.)	40 Embarked: 6 failed to launch. 34 Launched at 5000 yds.: 3 sank during swim in, 31 reached shore. See narrative for details (p. 99).

Appendix IV A

Summary of Operations by D.D. Tanks in the D-day Assault on Normandy, the 6th of June, 1944

Appendix IV B

13TH/18TH ROYAL HUSSARS (Q.M.O.) D.D. SQUADRONS' OPERATIONS ON THE 6TH OF JUNE, 1944

*Reports made by certain Officers at HERMANVILLE
on the 9th of June*

L.C.T. III 101, MAJOR WORMALD, O.C. 'A' Sqn.

1. I was with the flotilla officer of 14 L.C.T. Flotilla and received orders to 'FLOATER' at H- 110 mins. Orders were later received to close to 6,000 yds. and then to 5,000 yds., when 'FLAG ZERO' was given. The D.D. Drill was a complete success and craft loads reported 'FLAG FOUR CORRECT', within 6 mins. 'FLAG FIVE' was then given by the C.O.

2. From our launching position, we could see that we were approximately opposite the church in LION SUR MER and that our beach was about 45 degrees to our port bow. No bombing had started on the beach and the houses were clearly visible. The starboard navigational leader took station ahead and the launch was complete in about 4 mins. We went down the ramp in first gear because of the heavy seas and all craft set off somewhat extended, but keeping good station. No fire was opened by the enemy during the swim in or until we touched down at about 300 yds. from high water mark.

3. At approximately H- 30 mins. the A.V.R.E. Flotilla was seen to be bearing down on our Port quarter and passed us. All craft (tanks) managed to avoid being run down. Shortly after this, when fire from the L.Cs.T.R. began falling short, the A.V.R.E. L.C.T. Flotilla came astern and we were able to pass them. After this the beach became obscured by bombing, artillery concentrations, and the fire of the L.Cs.T.R., about 10 per cent. of which fell short.

4. On touching down, the A.V.R.E. L.Cs.T. passed us for the second time and the leading A.Vs.R.E. were wading ashore before our D.Ds. had moved in to deflate. Various explosive charges went off around us whilst we were moving from touch down position to deflating position. The screen of one tank was holed by one of these charges and the tank became swamped. Another of my tanks was swamped by what we thought was a wave soon after touching down (but it may also have been a charge). The crew had to bail out.

D.D. SQUADRONS' OPERATIONS

5. The leading A.V.R.E. was hit by an anti-tank gun as it emerged on to the beach. On the beach the 88 mm. and 75 cm. emplacements were quickly recognised and dealt with, as were all pill boxes and machine-gun posts. The two assault infantry companies were able to cross the beach without being fired on by small arms.

6. The A.Vs.R.E. and Flail operations were not highly successful on WHITE beach, but a gap was eventually found and we were able to pass straight through on to the second lateral.

L.C.T. III 102, CAPTAIN LYON, 2 I/C 'A' Sqn.

7. We inflated overnight without difficulty, turned off the air, and refilled our pillars in the morning. The sea was too rough at 7,000 yds., looked better at 6,000 yds. but we eventually launched at 5,000 yds. although the code word never reached me. The ramp was moving a good deal in the down position. I gave the crews a tot of rum.

8. All tanks had safety devices on the aft short struts and to this fact I attribute the perfect behaviour of these struts during the swim in. We went down the ramp in first gear, dipping the clutch at a time suitable to avoid heavy seas. I consider this method preferable in heavy seas to going down the ramp in second gear, as was the drill, as it allows scope for judgment. We were pushed well clear of the ramp, and had our propellers engaged within ten secs. The seaworthy quality of the Sherman D.D. astonished me, but it was necessary to adopt a zig-zag course to avoid getting beam on to the sea. The Squadron appeared to me to be keeping excellent station, and at one time I could easily count 19 tanks.

9. At about 1,200 yds. from the beach various L.Cs.T., apparently steered by maniacs, began to appear. It was now about H-15 mins., we were running to schedule, but had to change course to avoid these L.Cs.T. The Squadron was close together after this, but never managed to get into a good line for the touch down.

10. We touched down at about 350 yds. from the water line, motored quickly in, and deflated without incident. Throughout the last 2,000 yds., our L.C.T.R. rockets were falling short and fire from the shore kept things interesting. We took several fragments through the screen above water level. Ashore I was so busy firing at the enemy that I did not see what happened to the other four tanks, but one I know was rammed by an L.C.T. and others were hit by shell splinters, and in the end, mine was the only tank that got past the beach obstacles on to the lateral.

APPENDIX IV B

L.C.T. III 103, CAPTAIN DENNY, 2nd Captain 'A' Sqn.

11. Wireless communications for the launching drill worked well and my craft load launched at about 4,500 yds. The second tank had some mechanical trouble, but otherwise everything went according to plan. The sea was rough and the tank stood up to it far beyond my expectations.

12. At about 1,500 yds. from the beach the A.V.R.E. L.Cs.T. passed between the port and starboard columns. Shortly afterwards, they stopped their engines and then went astern, and we passed them again. The rockets then began their concentrations, and were falling short amongst us. The Squadron kept good station, in spite of these intrusions.

13. Enemy fire began at about 700 yds. from the beach, and the crews got inside their turrets. Up to 1,000 yds. I could pick out the required landmarks and check that we were steering in the right direction.

14. At about 800 yds. I was rammed by an L.C.T., and we sank immediately, the tank going over on its beam and sinking for about 25 ft., ending upside down. Although the crew were wearing A.T.E.A. and 'Mae Wests', they never appeared again, as I did not see them during the 30 mins. I was in the water. The rest of my column beached satisfactorily but three of them got swamped by the incoming tide and only one got through the gap on to the shore.

L.C.T. III 105, MAJOR RUGGE-PRICE, O.C. 'B' Sqn.

15. We did not launch owing to technical difficulties, but were eventually beached at about H+40 mins. and waded ashore. All tanks got safely through the beach obstacles and, after some delay, through the gaps on to the second lateral.

L.C.T. III 106, CAPTAIN R. NEAVE, 2 I/C 'B' Sqn.

16. Launching went according to plan at 5,000 yds., and the tanks reacted well to the heavy seas. We touched down in the right place after having to do a 200 yds. turn to port.

17. I identified at once the 88 mm. anti-tank guns, which did not open fire, but I put a round into it as I advanced on to the beach. I fired at all houses on the sea front, particularly at upper storey windows. All five of my tanks got eventually through the beach obstacles, but there was no gap on RED beach when I wanted to move forward so I organized a Bulldozer to make a gap in the sand dunes and got through on to the first lateral.

D.D. SQUADRONS' OPERATIONS

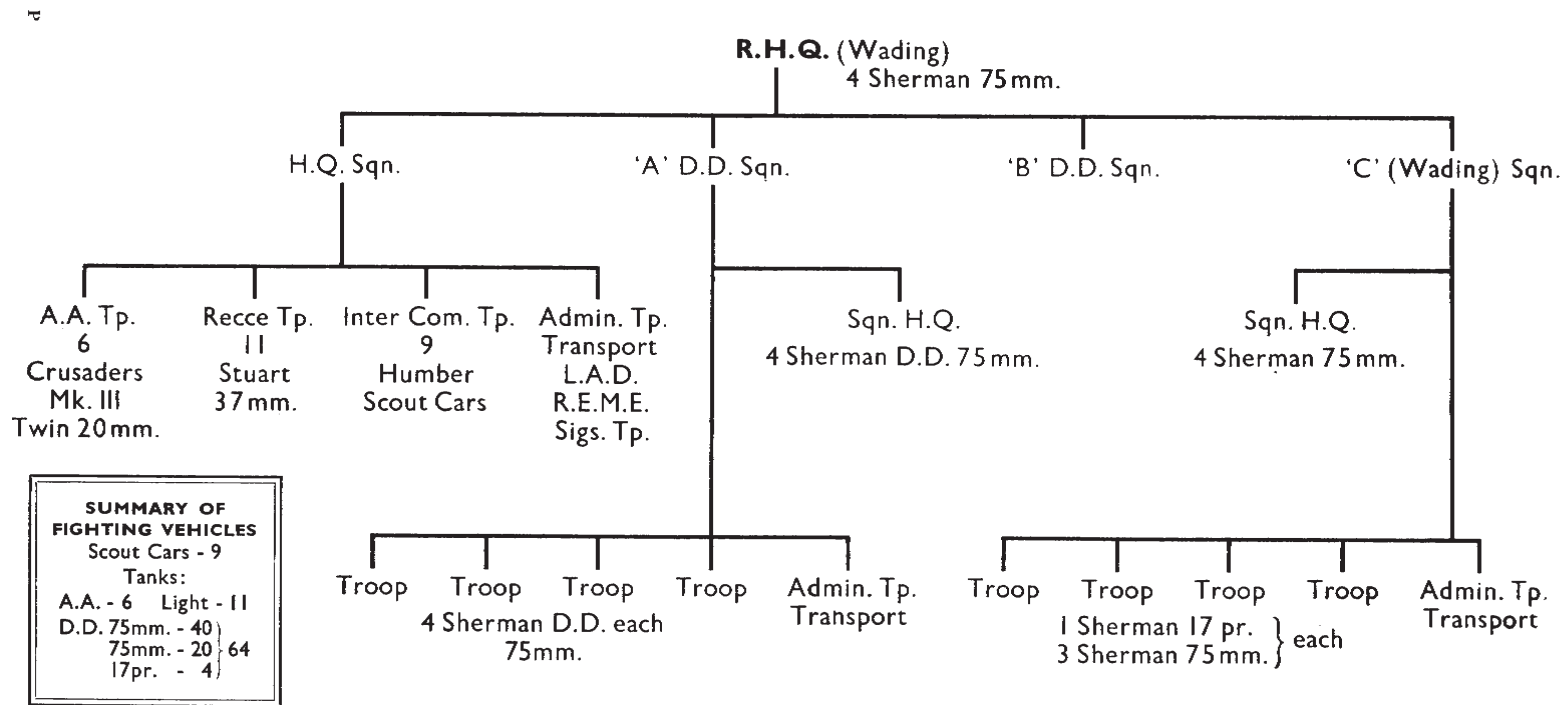
L.C.T. III 107, LIEUTENANT W. WORMALD, 2nd Captain 'B' Sqn.

18. Launching and wireless drill proceeded without hitch until the fourth tank broke both chains of the door during the process of launching. The tank did a four point launch, and survived. This made it impossible for the last tank to launch, and it presumably went back to ENGLAND.

19. Our craft was well in front of the others in the port group. Seas were heavy and made steering difficult. However, the tanks behaved admirably, and station was well kept. The speed of this column was reduced in order to allow the starboard column (Captain Neave) to catch up.

20. Rockets were falling short, and enemy fire began at about 1,000 yds. from the shore (probably mortars). We were nearly run down by A.V.R.E. L.Cs.T., but we somehow managed to avoid them. I presume that this intrusion by the A.V.R.E. L.Cs.T. was due to our being delayed by the rough sea and therefore about 5 mins. behind schedule.

21. We touched down at about H-hour, at about 400 yds. from high water mark, and well to seaward of the under-water obstacles on RED beach. It was difficult to make out the enemy defences, but we fired at the houses with Browning and H.E. until the infantry were across the beach. One tank was disabled on the beach by shell fire but the remaining three got through the exits on to the second lateral.



Appendix vi

13th/18th Royal Hussars—Outline Organization, Armoured Regiment with D.D. Tanks, 1944

Appendix vii

HONOURS AND AWARDS

for Gallant and Distinguished Service in the Field
during the Second World War

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER (D.S.O.)

A/Lt.-COLONEL V. A. B. DUNKERLY

On the 6th August 1944, Lt.-Col. V. A. B. Dunkerly was commanding his Regiment in support of the 129th Brigade during the operations against the MONT PINCON feature. The high ground and wooded slopes were held by enemy infantry with anti-tank guns. All approaches from the west were covered by an extensive mine belt. The infantry was held up and with the approach of evening the chances of capturing MONT PINCON were diminished. By daring and skilful handling of his Regiment, Lt.-Col. Dunkerly worked tanks round the south-western slopes of the hill. This enabled two troops to reach the summit and to engage the enemy there situated. Lt.-Col. Dunkerly immediately followed up with the remaining available tanks and gained the top as darkness fell. Throughout the night and in a thick mist he maintained his unit in the very heart of the German defences. At dawn he cleared the whole of the high ground and inflicted very considerable loss on the enemy retiring by the road on the east of MONT PINCON. By his bold and skilful handling of his Regiment he enabled this all important feature to pass into our hands.

CAPTAIN (T/MAJ.) D. B. WORMALD, M.C.

On the 6th June 1944, this Officer showed tremendous courage and leadership when commanding a squadron of swimming tanks. Sea conditions were considerably rougher than any yet experienced with these machines. The full weight of the enemy fire was directed at these tanks who were leading the assault on the beaches in broad daylight. Many rocket projectiles were falling in the water in front of the tanks. Maj. Wormald led his Squadron through the curtain of enemy fire and on through the mined beach obstacles when heavy seas were breaking on the beaches. He personally directed the fire fight and successfully silenced the enemy beach defences thus enabling the assault to proceed.

CAPTAIN (T/MAJ.) SIR DELAVAL COTTER, BT.

This Officer was in command of a Squadron of tanks which, when the remainder of the Regiment had captured MONT PINCON on the 6th

HONOURS AND AWARDS

August 1944, had been left with a depleted Battalion of Infantry to hold the village of LA VARINIÈRE on the Regiment's line of communication. This village had not been completely cleared of the enemy and there were also a large number in the surrounding woods and orchards. It was vital that the village should be held otherwise withdrawal from MONT PINCON would have been inevitable. With great courage and drive and under intense enemy shelling and mortar fire this Officer held the village for 24 hours which enabled the troops on MONT PINCON to be reinforced and the position secured. During this period Maj. Cotter's Squadron lost several tanks from short range infantry weapons and the danger from this was ever present as the enemy was able to creep up close to the tanks in the thick country. However, in spite of these very difficult circumstances Maj. Cotter's Squadron held on and was able to inflict serious casualties on the enemy. An 88 mm. S.P. gun was destroyed and a considerable number of enemy infantry killed and taken prisoners. There is no doubt that but for the tenacity and leadership shown by this Officer the captured position on MONT PINCON could not have been held.

T/Lt.-COLONEL THE EARL OF FEVERSHAM

As Commanding Officer of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars Lt.-Col. the Earl of Feversham fought the Regiment through the whole of the 'Veritable' and 'Turnscrew' operations from the assault on the SIEGFRIED LINE on the 8th February 1945 to the conclusion of hostilities. During the very heavy fighting west of CLEVES FOREST between the 15th February and the 17th February Lt.-Col. Feversham showed great personal courage and leadership under particularly heavy enemy shell fire. Supporting the 130th Infantry Brigade the Regiment, under his command, helped to roll up the German Lay-back position from north to south and enabled the 214th Infantry Brigade to go through to the gates of GOCH. Lt.-Col. Feversham took command of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars on the 9th October 1944 having previously commanded, with considerable skill for a period of two weeks during the battle round CAEN, after a former Commanding Officer had been killed. He showed throughout complete disregard for his own personal safety and the greatest determination in the face of the enemy.

BAR TO MILITARY CROSS

MAJOR D. B. WORMALD, D.S.O., M.C.

Maj. D. B. Wormald was in command of a Squadron of tanks supporting an Infantry Battalion of the Welch Regiment on the 6th March 1945. The Battalion objective was a small wood dominating

the main road into ALPON from the west. The enemy, composed of Paratroops, was fighting with extreme energy in this sector in an endeavour to withdraw the remainder of his forces from the WESEL bridgehead. The attack went in during the afternoon in the face of very heavy shelling and mortaring and when the final Company was launched to reach the limit of the objective where the wood met the road they came under heavy small arms and machine gun fire. The Squadron of tanks was already depleted, due to casualties and commitments on other objectives. Maj. Wormald, however, realising the necessity for immediate tank support collected a composite troop together and leading it himself went forward to the Company's assistance who were at the time pinned to the ground. In spite of the lack of infantry support this Officer pressed home the attack with the greatest vigour in most difficult wooded country which made turret traversing difficult and concealment for the enemy bazooka teams easy. On reaching the objective it was found that only a handful of infantrymen from the Company were left with the tanks and the enemy were at very close quarters. Maj. Wormald immediately wirelessly the situation back to the Battalion Commander who arranged to send up his carrier platoon to hold the position the tanks had won. It was four hours before this platoon arrived and in this time the small force of tanks and infantry were attacked almost continuously and the last two hours were spent in the dark which made the tanks' position even more precarious. However, the inspiration and fighting spirit of this Officer enabled the small force to beat off all attacks with heavy casualties to the enemy and to sustain them throughout abnormally heavy shelling and mortaring which was practically continuous. Maj. Wormald's superb example is an instance of his magnificent qualities of leadership, tactical appreciation and personal courage.

MILITARY CROSS (M.C.)

CAPTAIN (T/MAJ.) D.B. WORMALD & CAPTAIN J.A. STANCOMB

On the evening of May 20th 1940, these two officers were in command of four troops of a Composite Squadron. They received orders to come under command of the 3rd Infantry Brigade who were in difficulties owing to their busses having failed. Brig. Wilson wrote in the following terms: 'I consider that had it not been for the personal courage and initiative of the leaders and the gallantry of the Troops, my Brigade and Troops under my command might well have found themselves in a very serious situation. I shall be only too glad to endorse any recommendations you may think fit.'

HONOURS AND AWARDS

T/MAJOR J. R. CORDY-SIMPSON

Maj. Cordy-Simpson commands the A1 Echelon of the Regiment. On several occasions during the period under review he has led 'soft' vehicles through intense shell fire to bring supplies to tanks in the front line. Only by his initiative and resourcefulness has the Regiment avoided being short of ammunition, fuel or supplies. This has frequently meant leading columns at night through areas where large numbers of enemy had been by-passed and could easily have attacked the column. On one occasion in August 1944, this Officer's Scout Car was blown up by a double Teller mine and he was wounded. However, he insisted on being transferred to another vehicle and successfully replenished the Regiment. On another occasion, at BERRIGEN, on the ALBERT CANAL, the Echelon was attacked by a large party of enemy who had infiltrated behind the lines. Although they succeeded in destroying a number of vehicles Maj. Cordy-Simpson very soon organized parties of men to deal with them. These parties he personally led and very quickly drove the enemy from the Echelon area with heavy losses and thus prevented them from fulfilling their primary rôle of blowing the BERRIGEN BRIDGE. The fighting spirit and disregard for danger shown by this Officer has been an inspiration to all ranks in the Echelon and has instilled into them the highest ideals of service. His personal leadership has played a vital and essential part in any measure of success which the Regiment may have obtained.

LIEUTENANT W. G. DENNY

Early on the morning of the 21st January 1945, 'B' Squadron 13th/18th Royal Hussars was ordered to take up positions in the German village of WALDEFEUCHT to support an Infantry Battalion who had taken the village on the previous evening. Lt. Denny's troop was to support the Company holding the northern approaches to the village. On arrival he found that the Infantry Company was not yet consolidated and that there were still Germans in the place. Furthermore a counter-attack was developing by infantry supported by Tiger tanks. This left the troop without protection and the remainder of the Squadron was already embroiled in battle with infantry and tanks at the north-west end of the village and could not support the troop. Lt. Denny, however, ordered his tanks into their allotted positions and engaged the enemy. The enemy infiltrated right into the centre of the village and despite the fact that manoeuvre was impossible, due to the enemy tanks which were so sited that they could fire down the exits to the square, the troop remained in position and engaged the enemy for an hour and a half. During this time almost

APPENDIX VII

every known device was used by the German infantry against his stationary tanks including bazookas, sticky and magnetic bombs and grenades. All these failed to dislodge the troop which inflicted considerable casualties on the enemy although by this time two of its tanks had been knocked out. Eventually, he was ordered to withdraw and despite the obviously great difficulties, he successfully accomplished this. The fortitude displayed by this Officer was of the highest order and it was his courage and inspiration and fighting qualities of his troop which prevented the enemy from reaching the main defences of the village and reinforcing their forces who were already heavily engaging our troops. This counter-attack was eventually driven off as were several others and by the following morning, after further reinforcements of infantry, the village was firmly in our hands. Had this Officer not handled his troop with such skill and boldness, it is a matter of great doubt whether the village could have been held.

CAPTAIN N. N. M. DENNY

This Officer was second in command of 'A' Squadron of 13th/18th Royal Hussars. On August the 6th 1944, the Regiment was in support of the 129th Infantry Brigade who were attacking MONT PINCON from the west with two Battalions up. Capt. Denny's Squadron was supporting the right hand Battalion and at about 18.00 hrs. the Battalion was held up in the village of LA VARINIERE by heavy enemy machine-gun and mortar fire. Capt. Denny was ordered to command and take forward a patrol of a troop of tanks, later reinforced to two troops, to go forward if possible on to the summit of the mountain. Capt. Denny led this patrol with exceptional dash and complete success in face of great difficulties. The going was extremely difficult with very steep slopes through enclosed country where enemy infantry with anti-tank weapons was known to be. In addition the whole route was under enemy fire and the summit of the mountain under direct shell fire of heavy calibre to which the patrol was subjected on arrival. Despite these difficulties and losing two tanks on the way this Officer reached his objective by his great determination. The resolution and dash displayed by this Officer in accomplishing his task was of the very highest order with the result that the enemy was taken by surprise and a most important feature was captured. By his tenacity, under heavy shell fire, the objective was held until reinforced after dark. It was largely due to this particular action that we managed to capture MONT PINCON the key tactical feature in this part of France. Until PINCON was in our hands further advance was impossible.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

LIEUTENANT (T/CAPT.) P. E. L. LYON

On the 6th June 1944, Capt. Lyon commanded a column of swimming tanks in the assault on the beaches. Prevailing weather conditions were worse than any experienced during training with these machines adding very materially to the hazards of the assault. By bold and skilful handling of his column Capt. Lyon was able to bring heavy fire to bear on the enemy positions ashore so far dominating them, that the infantry was able rapidly to cross the beaches and secure positions inland. The initiative and daring displayed by this Officer in circumstances of exceptional danger were of a very high order and contributed in large measure to the success of the assault.

LIEUTENANT (T/CAPT.) R. M. S. NEAVE

On the 6th June 1944, Capt. Robert Neave commanded a column of swimming tanks in the assault on the beaches. He led his column through heavy seas and fire from all types of weapons to a successful touch down. Under his direction the tanks of his column then successfully engaged the enemy defences. Later a serious congestion arose owing to casualties at the beach exits. Showing considerable initiative with complete disregard for his own safety under heavy fire, Capt. Neave discovered and passed information which enabled the tanks to leave the beaches and support the infantry forward on to their objective.

LIEUTENANT J. W. SMITH

Late on the evening of the 1st April 1945, the leading Company of the 1st Worcestershire Regiment and 3rd Troop 'C' Squadron 13th/18th Royal Hussars, commanded by Lt. Smith, having cleared DIEPENHEIM, decided to secure a vital bridge over the TWENTHE CANAL by rushing it before darkness set in. This entailed a dash through thick woods for a distance of over 3,000 yards and the enemy from DIEPENHEIM were known to have withdrawn on this route. However, this bold scheme was quickly put into effect. Lt. Smith's tank, carrying some of the infantry on the tank, moved at top speed and spraying the woods with Browning fire they charged the bridge. Lt. Smith's tank and one other of the troop were finally bazooka'd when not far distant and after many shots had been directed at them. Lt. Smith and his crew, together with a few infantry, proceeded to engage the enemy after their vehicle had been destroyed and the enemy were driven off. In this action great dash and fighting spirit was displayed by this Officer. His quick appreciation of the importance of reaching his objective in the failing light and his courage in the attempt to achieve it showed the highest qualities of leadership.

APPENDIX VII

CAPTAIN (T/MAJ.) R. P. P. SMYLY

1st February to 30th April 1945. The Squadron under Maj. Smyly's command, during the period under review, carried out exceptionally responsible tasks in an exemplary manner. The standard of training, initiative and whole-hearted gallantry shown throughout the Squadron radiated from the leadership and courage that Maj. Smyly himself showed. From March 29th until April 2nd Maj. Smyly's Squadron operated as advance guard to the 6th Airborne Division and during those four arduous days the excellent handling, coupled with the great dash of the Squadron, assisted the rapid progress made. On April 4th the Squadron reconnoitred bridges over the EMS WESER CANAL north of OSNABRUCK. That two of these bridges were taken intact and held until taken over by larger forces was due to the initiative and drive of Maj. Smyly. At all times this Officer showed determined skill in the handling of his Squadron and while working right up with his forward troops his coolness and gallantry under fire was an example to his whole command.

LIEUTENANT D. F. SPENCER

On the morning of the 24th February 1945, this Officer was commanding a troop of tanks in support of the 2nd Monmouthshire Regiment in an attack on a wood south of GOCH. The attack began at 06.00 hrs. and progress was slow against stubborn opposition in the dark. By first light the infantry were pinned to the ground by heavy machine-gun fire and the leading tank was halted by a minefield and later destroyed by 88 mm. fire. Lt. Spencer immediately led his troop round the minefield and continued to engage the enemy. This, however, failed to dislodge the enemy and the infantry remained unable to move. Lt. Spencer, therefore, decided to send one of his remaining three tanks forward under covering fire of the other two, but this tank, when 15 yards from the enemy, blew up on a mine and was too close to them to engage the enemy effectively. Lt. Spencer, therefore, closed with the enemy in an endeavour to restore the situation. Visibility was practically nil due to smoke and prevented artillery support or support from other tanks. Meanwhile the second tank had been destroyed by a bazooka and at this stage his own tank was also attacked by bazookas and twice hit. However, in the most determined manner this Officer continued firing all his guns until the crew of the first bazooka'd tank had taken shelter behind his own tank but no sooner had this been done than his own tank was hit and set on fire by a 88 mm. and his driver killed. Lt. Spencer returned to the tank and endeavoured to extricate the driver, whom he did not know to be dead, under extremely heavy

HONOURS AND AWARDS

and aimed fire. He was twice blown from the top of the tank by blast, before he discovered that he could be of no aid. Meanwhile the last remaining tank was engaging the enemy with all its guns and continued to do so until all its ammunition was expended and during this time Lt. Spencer was able successfully to withdraw his unhorsed crews. While this had been going on the infantry had been able to by-pass the strong point and captured their objective. But for the gallantry and determination displayed by this Officer there is no doubt that the infantry would not have gained their objective and but for his complete disregard of personal safety and cool behaviour the unhorsed men of his troop would certainly have been lost.

LIEUTENANT W. WORMALD

On the 6th June 1944, Lt. Wormald commanded a column of swimming tanks. The lowering point from which his column was launched was at a distance of 5,000 yards from the beaches. The sea was exceptionally rough and the beach enveloped in smoke. Under conditions of great danger and exceptional difficulty this Officer navigated his column with consummate skill and accuracy, pursuing an unswerving course through a continual hail of shell and mortar fire, until he reached the belt of mined obstructions. Threading his way through these he succeeded in touching down in a position from which with great rapidity he was able to bring most effective fire upon the enemy defences. Lt. Wormald's bold leadership and superb offensive spirit were largely responsible for maintaining the momentum of the assault force against the strong points on shore, and thereby assured the successful advance of the infantry to seize their objective.

LIEUTENANT P. D. V. HUNTER

On the 6th June 1944, Lt. Hunter was commander of a troop of swimming tanks in the assault on the beaches. Despite very bad weather conditions which increased the hazards of his task, and in the face of heavy shell and mortar fire this Officer led his troop successfully to the touch down position and proceeded at point blank range to reduce the enemy positions opposing him. His skilful and courageous handling of his troop throughout an exceptionally hazardous operation were of the greatest assistance to the infantry and to the success of the assault.

LIEUTENANT H. D. JENNISON

Lt. Jennison was leader of a troop of tanks which was part of a tank patrol ordered to go forward and seize and hold, if possible, the summit of MONT PINCON on the 6th August 1944. His troop was

APPENDIX VII

without infantry support which was held up by very heavy machine-gun and mortar fire in the village of LA VARINIERE. Lt. Jennison's route to the summit led through very difficult country, the approaches being extremely steep, cut up and enclosed. The enemy was known to have men with bazookas along the approaches and the whole route was under enemy mortar and shell fire. After Lt. Jennison's troop had got half way towards their objective one of his tanks was blown up by a mine, and another, due to the nature of the country, was overturned and unable to continue. In spite of this Lt. Jennison led his troop on the objective and remained there with great tenacity until reinforced, first by another troop and later by the remainder of his Squadron. The very high standard of leadership displayed by this Officer and his determination to carry out his task was largely responsible for the success of the attack and the maintenance of the objective, where he was subjected to heavy and continuous shell fire.

CAPTAIN T. G. CAMERON, R.A.M.C.

Capt. Cameron was the M.O. attached to the 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Q.M.O.). On the morning of July 18th 1944, he established the Regimental Medical Aid Post in a field at ESCOVILLE prepared to deal with any casualties incurred by the Regiment at TOUFFREVILLE and SANNEVILLE. During this action and throughout the day the R.A.P. was subjected to almost continual mortar and shell fire. As a result of this there were a number of casualties at the post itself including the Technical Adjutant, the only other Officer present who was killed. In addition battle casualties were coming in for attention in a steady stream. With complete disregard to his own personal safety and under this heavy and continuous fire, Capt. Cameron rendered immediate medical assistance to all casualties and this was despite the fact that the only cover he had was a small trench under the awning of his half tracked M.14 and that he himself had been hit in the leg by a mortar splinter. This Officer's cool and skilful behaviour was an inspiration to all with him and no wounded man was left unattended throughout the heavy mortaring and shelling which was making conditions extremely difficult.

LIEUTENANT J. H. ALDAM

This Officer commanded a tank troop of the Regiment throughout the whole campaign in N.W. Europe. He missed no action in which the Regiment was engaged, and although his troop was engaged in more actions than any other in the Squadron its casualties were lighter. This was undoubtedly due to the very great skill, courage and resourcefulness shown by Lt. Aldam, which were an example

HONOURS AND AWARDS

to all with whom he served. On several occasions Lt. Aldam fought the most brilliant and decisive actions for which alone he has been recommended for a decoration; it would be difficult to find any troop leader who has shown such magnificent qualities of leadership on so many occasions.

CAPTAIN J. R. PALMER

On the 29th May 1940, when German tanks had broken through our line between VYFWEG and WEST CAPPEL, Capt. Palmer showed conspicuous courage, coolness and resource in re-establishing the situation under heavy fire from tank weapons until he was severely wounded.

MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (M.B.E.)

T/CAPTAIN J. A. S. NEAVE

This Officer has shown outstanding ability, resourcefulness and devotion to duty. As Adjutant he has worked untiringly in planning and reorganization under four different Commanding Officers. He has not missed a single battle since the Regiment landed on D-day and at the conclusion of each period of action his outstanding energy and drive has enabled the Regiment to reorganize and train with minimum delay. Any measure of success which the Regiment may have achieved in this campaign can be traced back to the executive skill and zeal of this Officer who has co-ordinated the activities of the Regiment both in and out of action in a most remarkable manner. I can name no Officer within the Regiment who has made a greater contribution to the efficiency of the Regiment or deserves more thoroughly recognition of his services than J. A. S. Neave.

MILITARY MEDAL (M.M.)

SERGEANT J. BELL

On the 6th June 1944, Sgt. Bell was commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. In spite of the rough seas which flooded his tank, he remained at his post and drove on towards the shore through heavy shell fire. He finally succeeded in reaching the beach just before his tank was swamped by the waves. He engaged the enemy till the incoming tide covered his guns. The endurance, skill and courage displayed by this N.C.O. in successfully steering his tank to touch down through the rough seas which prevailed and the beach obstacles call for the highest commendation.

APPENDIX VII

CORPORAL R. BINNS

At MONT PINCON on 7th/8th August 1944, Cpl. Binns brought his vehicle, which was put out of action down the hill from Pt. 278, to the bridge at 813448. He did this by himself for 400 yards and under very accurately observed fire from 88 mm., having previously sent the other members of his crew to safety and to warn the L.A.D. The tank tow rope had parted from the A.R.V. and movement by the Crusader without help could only be for very short spells and extremely slowly with long intervals in between. He took the tank to a position of safety and from which he could go no further without help. By his action he got the tank to a position from which it was recovered on the 9th—although even then 500 yards in front of the 'safe recovery line'. It was undoubtedly due to the courage and determination of Cpl. Binns that his tank was not lost. While dismounted he was under aimed enemy fire, but displayed exceptional initiative by which he was able to regain the driver's seat and remove his tank to a place of safety.

SERGEANT T. W. BUCK

On the 6th June 1944, Sjt. Buck was a commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. With remarkable skill he steered his tank through the partially covered mines and obstructions. In the face of heavy shell and mortar fire he engaged the enemy shore positions immediately on reaching touch down, completely dominating those opposite him and so enabling the infantry to cross the beaches in his vicinity and proceed inland. The enterprise, skill and daring displayed by this N.C.O. in the navigating of his tank together with his subsequent conduct on the beach were outstanding and contributed materially to the success of the assault in his sector.

CORPORAL L. R. CHARMBURY

On the 6th June 1944, Cpl. Charmbury was commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. The death of the O.C. Beach Group had temporarily delayed clearance and caused serious congestion. As a result this N.C.O.'s tank was forced to remain in deep water and under enemy fire for a protracted period. Despite the heavy seas and the intake of sea water into his tank, Cpl. Charmbury continued to blast the beach defences and so covered the infantry landing until the tank was finally swamped.

L'SERGEANT J. HARDIE

On the 6th June 1944, L'Sjt. Hardie was commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. Although the tanks on either side of him were destroyed by enemy fire this N.C.O. by skilful

HONOURS AND AWARDS

manoeuvre succeeded in reaching the beach. Despite his isolated position L'Sjt. Hardie thereupon boldly engaged the enemy defences until gaps had been forced through them. On proceeding inland his tank was blown up by a mine. With utter disregard for his own personal safety he then left its protection and faced heavy mortar fire in order to direct other tanks through the gap and so avoid serious congestion. His gallant and cool headed action undoubtedly saved other tanks from disaster and almost certainly the lives of several of his comrades.

L'CORPORAL A. HEELES

On the 6th August 1944, when this soldier's Squadron was holding the village of LA VARINIERE, his troop was ordered to go forward to patrol to the summit of MONT PINCON. On the way which led through extremely difficult country, known to be held by the enemy infantry with anti-tank weapons, three tanks out of four in his troop became bogged. L'Cpl. Heeles was co-driver of the tank which did not get bogged and with great gallantry he dismounted in the face of enemy fire in order to attach a tow rope to one of the bogged tanks, and this enabled it to be successfully recovered. While operations were proceeding in an endeavour to recover the other two tanks, the enemy was still active and L'Cpl. Heeles formed part of a dismounted patrol to try and dislodge the enemy infantry from some nearby hedges. This he carried out with great vigour and with considerable success. On the evening of the same day L'Cpl. Heeles was a member of an un-horsed crew who returned on foot from the village to A1 Echelon, about two miles away. On the way back the party was ambushed by the enemy and two members were wounded. With great courage and disregard for his own safety L'Cpl. Heeles managed, with the assistance of the others, to bring the remaining wounded members of the party to A1 Echelon. The courage and fighting spirit displayed by this soldier throughout a long and tedious day was of an exceptionally high order.

SERGEANT R. HEPPEL

On the 6th June 1944, Sjt. Hepper was commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. His tank was compelled to touch down higher up on the beach than was planned; in consequence he found himself faced by a barrier of anti-tank obstacles fitted with mines, the dangerous nature of which he was well aware. With extreme skill and steadiness of judgement he manipulated his tank through all these obstacles. From his isolated position on the beach he engaged the enemy alone and unsupported. His action materially assisted in the subjugation of the enemy defences on the flank.

APPENDIX VII

CORPORAL G. A. HIND

On the 6th June 1944, Cpl. Hind was commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. Although the beach exits were not then marked this N.C.O. drove straight inland over supposed minefields with complete disregard for his own personal safety. His initiative and outstanding daring in the face of heavy fire and the hazards of the minefields instilled confidence into those around him and succeeded in lifting the infantry on to their objective.

CORPORAL W. A. LEE

On the 6th June 1944, Cpl. Lee was commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. In the face of heavy shell and mortar fire and explosions from underwater obstacles which damaged his tank, this N.C.O. displayed remarkable enterprise and skill in successfully steering it to touch down on the beaches, in a totally unseaworthy condition. He thereupon boldly engaged with fire the beach defences until the tank was put out of action by sinking. This N.C.O.'s persistence and determination to play his part in the destruction and domination of the defences materially assisted in the assault.

CORPORAL H. J. MACDONALD

This soldier was inexperienced and had only recently become part of a tank crew as a turret gunner in his Troop Leader's tank. During operations with the 231st Infantry Brigade on 1st and 2nd August 1944, in the LICTOT area when his Squadron—'C' Squadron—was in support of this formation, his Troop Leader was wounded. Tpr. Macdonald immediately took over command of the tank and continued to fight it with great energy and considerable success. Later the same day his Troop Sgt., who had taken over the troop, was also put out of action. However, Tpr. Macdonald with great calmness continued the fight more or less on his own in close support of the infantry with the greatest vigour. This he also did on the following day with equal success and showed great initiative and enterprise. In view of his inexperience this action is worthy of the highest praise. The country in which the operations were taking place was extremely difficult, being very close, thickly wooded and tenaciously held by the enemy. However, in spite of his inexperience his efforts obtained a very great measure of success.

SERGEANT C. MOLAN

On the 6th June 1944, Sgt. Molan was commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. In the face of heavy fire he boldly engaged the enemy shore positions immediately on touching down,

HONOURS AND AWARDS

completely dominating the positions facing him and so enabling the infantry to cross the beaches and proceed inland. The enterprise, skill and daring displayed by Sjt. Molan in handling his tank in the water and avoiding the dangerous obstacles, as well as his subsequent conduct on the beaches were outstanding and deserving of the highest commendation.

TROOPER D. J. HOLLOWAY

On the 21st January 1945, during the attack on WALDFEUCHT Tpr. Holloway distinguished himself by showing presence of mind and personal courage in difficult circumstances. His troop was virtually cornered in the village square of WALDFEUCHT. The enemy infantry were in all the surrounding houses and there was also a Tiger tank in the nearby street, waiting to approach the square. The enemy infantry were attacking vigorously with grenades, machine-gun and rifle fire and bazookas. One tank was knocked out, the crew being wounded or killed. Then Tpr. Holloway's Crew Commander was seriously wounded in the head, and subsequently died. Tpr. Holloway took charge of the tank, and by his presence of mind and courage, held the enemy at bay. The situation worsened and it was decided to withdraw the troop. Again the success of the withdrawal depended entirely on the covering fire of Tpr. Holloway's tank. This he did, and did so well, that the two tanks were able to get out and reach our next defence line without further mishap. The success of this action and withdrawal was due entirely to the personal courage displayed by this soldier, who showed complete disregard for his own personal safety against a superior enemy force.

SERJEANT H. B. MORRIS

On the 6th June 1944, Sjt. Morris was in command of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. During the 5,000 yards swim heavy shell and mortar fire was directed particularly on his tank but notwithstanding the buffeting Sjt. Morris received, he continued coolly on his course steering between the innumerable beach obstacles and gaining the shore. Immediately on reaching touch down he gave invaluable support to the A.V.R.E. engaged on clearing a lane through the minefields and by his initiative, resource and example, materially assisted in clearing the congestion caused by tanks which had been knocked out or damaged by the enemy's fire.

SERJEANT S. E. RODWELL

On the 6th June 1944, Sjt. Rodwell was commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. When this N.C.O. was negotiating his tank through the under-water obstacles it was over-run by an

APPENDIX VII

L.C.T. Notwithstanding the fact that the tank was sinking, Sjt. Rodwell remained at his post, steered his tank to touch down, and continued to fire his guns at the enemy until the tank was actually submerged below the surface of the sea. The unflinching courage and devotion to duty of this N.C.O. under well-nigh desperate conditions merit the highest praise.

SERJEANT R. E. C. WARRINGTON

On the 6th June 1944, Sjt. Warrington was commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. Although exposed for a prolonged period to heavy shelling and mortars, Sjt. Warrington continued to show the greatest resource and initiative in handling his guns to keep down enemy fire. As the beach became more and more congested prior to the making of exits, his courage and cool-headed judgement proved of the greatest value in protecting the infantry awaiting their turn to assault.

CORPORAL W. G. WILSON

On the 6th June 1944, Cpl. Wilson was a commander of a swimming tank in the assault on the beaches. In spite of his tank being repeatedly hit this N.C.O. with skill and consummate coolness succeeded in navigating his tank through beach mines and obstructions and in silencing the fire of the enemy positions opposite him on the shore. His unswerving determination to complete his task in the face of all obstacles and dangers constitutes an outstanding example of devotion to duty.

SERJEANT E. O. YORK

On the 15th February 1945, Sjt. York was in command of a tank which, with two others, fought with 43rd Division in an action in the LOUISENDORF area. The infantry came under intense mortar and small arms fire from a large group of farm buildings and one tank was knocked out by A.P. and the other destroyed. Sjt. York manoeuvred his tank to a position on the flank only 25 yards from the enemy strong-point. From here, he was able to dominate a strongly-held trench system in rear of the farm and do great execution among enemy moving between the farm and the trenches. In spite of repeated attacks by enemy snipers and bazookas (one of which blew off a bogey wheel), he stayed unsupported by any infantry for about two and a half hours, during which time the farm itself was engaged from point blank range and set on fire. After gaining the objective, Sjt. York was ordered to join another troop to ward off an enemy counter-attack, which was successfully beaten off. He fulfilled this rôle over a period of four hours with the same resolution and cheerfulness that characterised his conduct

HONOURS AND AWARDS

during the entire day. His determination to destroy the enemy and to hold on to ground already taken at whatever cost, was a magnificent example and inspiration to other tanks and to the other infantry.

SERJEANT F. KENYON, R.E.M.E.

During Operation 'Clipper' in November 1944, the Regiment was involved in the capture of BAUCHEM and the woods running due north of it for 3,000 yards, and during this battle Sjt. Kenyon was in command of an A.R.V. The going was extremely bad due to the almost continuous rain of the past few days and many tanks were stuck. The battle lasted three days and during this time no less than 21 bogged tanks had to be recovered. Throughout these three days the area was under almost continuous shell and mortar fire. During the whole of the battle Sjt. Kenyon was wherever his services were most needed, and it was largely due to his leadership that the recovery of these tanks was possible and this undoubtedly was a battle-winning factor. His example was an inspiration to all A.R.V. crews and his complete disregard for personal danger was largely responsible for this fine recovery achievement.

SERJEANT C. J. H. RATTLE

This N.C.O. was a tank Troop Serjeant throughout the campaign in N.W. Europe. He commanded a (D.D.) tank in the assault landing, and fought it most effectively on the beach before it was hit. At the time of the capture of MONT PINCON, Sjt. Rattle's tank was one of the first to reach the summit where it was bogged; although his tank was in full view of the enemy and under constant and heavy shellfire, he continued to give invaluable fire support to the rest of his Squadron. During the whole of the campaign Sjt. Rattle showed the highest qualities of leadership and bravery, and has thus won for himself the entire and well deserved confidence of all with whom or under whom he served.

L'SERJEANT J. C. BRISTOW

On the 1st April 1945, during the advance to BREMEN, one troop of 'C' Squadron of which Sjt. Bristow was Troop Serjeant, was in the lead with a company of the 1st Worcesters. The intention was to capture the bridge over the TWENTHE CANAL at GOOR. The wooded country short of the bridge was found to be held by the enemy and there was not time to clear the area before last light. The decision was therefore made to rush the bridge and Sjt. Bristow set off in the leading tank at full speed, with all guns blazing. The second tank was bazooka'd, but Sjt. Bristow did not pause. When only 15 yards from the bridge his tank was bazooka'd twice—and the surviving

APPENDIX VII

crew, Sjt. Bristow and his operator baled out. The bridge was blown shortly afterwards. Although the bridge was not captured intact, Sjt. Bristow, by his fearless and dashing action, enabled the infantry to clear the woods before the bridge against negligible resistance from a completely demoralised enemy.

SERGEANT S. G. DIVER

Awarded for gallantry with B.E.F. in 1940.

BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL (B.E.M.)

TROOPER G. W. DOBSON

At approximately 12.00 hrs. on the 30th September 1944, at MALDEN a Typhoon fighter crashed. Tpr. Dobson with Tpr. Austen (4th/7th Dragoon Guards) and Tpr. Pocock (265th Forward Delivery Squadron) were in the vicinity and without the slightest hesitation or thought of their own safety went to the aircraft to help the pilot. The aircraft was on fire and there was the strong possibility of exploding ammunition; in spite of this the three troopers smashed the cupola over the cockpit and extricated the pilot who was in a dazed condition and unable to help himself. About 15 seconds after the pilot was brought to a place of safety the main petrol tank exploded and the 'plane was enveloped in flames. I think that there is no doubt that the prompt and courageous action of these three men saved the pilot's life.

CORPORAL E. J. HENSON

Cpl. Henson, who was a Squadron clerk, worked in a consistently efficient way both before D-day in England and after V.E.-day in Germany. He was instrumental in helping his Squadron to achieve and maintain its very high standard of efficiency in training and occupational rôles, and by his untiring and cheerful efforts, played a most helpful part under many difficult conditions.

SERGEANT S. H. CAUSEBROOK

This N.C.O. was a Mechanist Serjeant for five years. During all this time his work was of the highest order and beyond praise. He did particularly well during the period just previous to D-day in preparing the Squadron's D.D. tanks. His expert knowledge and unlimited capacity for work were unfailing at all times. He led his fitter's staff extremely well throughout these years and his organisation was highly efficient, and in consequence the standard of maintenance in the Squadron was also high. The magnificent work done by this N.C.O. throughout the war was, beyond doubt, worthy of recognition.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

CROIX DE GUERRE – SILVER STAR

LIEUTENANT R. E. NORRIS

Lt. Norris landed in command of a troop of wading tanks at H+40 on D-day 6th June 1944. Since that day he fought the whole time with his Squadron and took part in every action in which the Regiment fought. On several occasions he was called upon to command a half Squadron owing to casualties and when the Squadron was split up in support of two Infantry Battalions and he did this with great success. During the campaign Lt. Norris fought with consistent and conspicuous gallantry and attained a very high knowledge of armoured tactics in close support of infantry. He was the only surviving Troop Leader who landed with the Squadron on D-day and his experience frequently made it necessary for him to undertake the most hazardous tasks. On each occasion he discharged his duty with great skill and daring. Instances of these actions are as follows:—

1. During operations east of the ORNE, his troop was detached from the remainder of the Squadron and in support of an isolated Battalion of the Highland Division. An enemy post of some considerable strength had been an encumbrance and was attacked by this Officer's troop and a platoon of infantry and completely eliminated without loss, in very difficult country.
2. During the battle of ST. HONORINE on the 1st July, Lt. Norris's troop was on the left flank of the Regiment. He had carefully concealed his tanks and when the enemy counter-attack came in his troop hotly engaged them from the flank with great success, and later, despite intense shell fire, remained in observation and the information he passed back was a vital factor in the complete rout of the enemy armour.
3. During the break out from the SEINE Bridgehead the Regiment had to advance up a narrow enclosed valley to GISORS. For the latter part of this advance Lt. Norris's troop was leading. Towards the evening, when the light was failing, he was still short of his objective and it was vital that the bridge in DANGU should be captured intact that night. The enemy was known to be holding DANGU in some strength but with great determination and in semi-darkness Lt. Norris pushed on and captured the bridge intact. It was not until some time later that the Motor Company attached to the Regiment was able finally to drive the enemy out.

In addition to these actions quoted Lt. Norris played a successful and important part in numerous others. Lt. Norris was supremely successful as a Troop Leader. His devotion to duty and determina-

APPENDIX VII

tion, resourcefulness and disregard for personal safety were of the highest order and worthy of recognition.

WARRANT OFFICER I (R.S.M.) A. L. HIND

This Warrant Officer landed with the Regiment on D-day and was with the Regiment in F Echelon in every battle in which we have been engaged. Throughout the campaign he has displayed qualities of leadership and a fighting spirit of the highest order. He has been in command of a section of M14s which have been used alternatively as ambulances or ammunition carriers. His example as leader of this section has produced remarkable results. On D-day, the 6th June 1944 at H+40, he landed with his M14s loaded with ammunition and under intense fire went forward to the tanks that were still on the beach and replenished with ammunition these vehicles that were so enabled to proceed inland and carry on the fight. Again at ESCOVILLE on the 18th July, during the battle of the BUTTE-DE-LA-HOGUE, R.S.M. Hind's M14s were used as ambulances. On this occasion the R.A.P. at which he was positioned came under extremely heavy mortar and shell fire. Throughout the day this continued, and there were heavy casualties. R.S.M. Hind was untiring in his efforts to assist the wounded and showed a superb disregard for danger which was an inspiration to all present and was instrumental in the safe evacuation of all casualties. These are but two examples of this Warrant Officer's devotion to duty which has been outstanding throughout the campaign.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S CERTIFICATES

W.O.II (S.S.M.) F. Moore	Sjt. F. B. Spencer
W.O.II (S.S.M.) W. Bell	Sjt. R. A. Fowler
W.O.II (S.S.M.) A. Vichery	Sjt. R. Pruce
M.Q.M.S. T. Spencer	Cpl. R. Todd
Sjt. C. Cook	Cpl. J. Dalby
Sjt. W. Holdsworth	Cpl. T. Thomas
Sjt. W. Chapman	L'Cpl. J. Liddell
Sjt. J. Marke	Cpl. G. Everett
Sjt. A. Barton	Cpl. T. Bosworth
Sjt. S. Causebrook	Cpl. F. Spence
Sjt. C. Mason	L'Cpl. A. Dutton
Sjt. W. Kelford (A.C.C.)	Tpr. K. Daniels
Sjt. A. Spence	Tpr. F. Barnfather
L'Sjt. R. W. Bailey (for gallantry)	

HONOURS AND AWARDS

for Gallant and Distinguished Service to
Officers of the Regiment – not serving with the Regiment
in the Second World War

ORDER OF THE BATH (C.B.)

Brigadier C. H. Miller, C.B.E. *Western Desert*, 1942

ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (C.B.E.)

Brigadier J. N. Lumley, M.C. *Home Forces*, 1943

T/Brigadier C. H. Miller. *Western Desert*, 1941

Lt.-Colonel J. I. Chrystall, M.C. *Palestine & Transjordan*, 1938

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER (D.S.O.)

Major-General C. H. Miller, C.B., C.B.E.

N. Africa, Sicily & Italy, 1943

Captain R. A. Critchley, M.C. *Burma*, 1945

Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Hermon

MILITARY CROSS

Captain R. A. Critchley. *Abyssinia*, 1940

Lieutenant W. P. M. Ross. 1942

A/Captain J. J. Selwyn. *Dieppe*, 1942

ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (O.B.E.)

T/Lt.-Colonel O. St. J. Loftus. *N. Africa*, 1943

Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Hermon, D.S.O.

U.S.A. LEGION OF MERIT

Major-General C. H. Miller, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.

Sicily & Italy, 1943

Brigadier J. I. Chrystall, C.B.E., M.C. *Egypt*, 1942 - 1944

OFFICIER LEGION D'HONNEUR AND CROIX DE GUERRE AVEC PALM

Major-General C. H. Miller, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. *N. Africa*, 1943

NETHERLANDS COMPANION OF THE ORDER OF ORANGE NASSAU

Lt.-Colonel E. H. Tinker. *N.W. Europe*, 1945

Appendix viii

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

Officers, Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) who were killed or died during the Second World War 1939-1945.

*'O valiant hearts, who to your glory came
Through dust of conflict and through battle flame,
Tranquil you lie, your knightly virtue proved,
Your memory hallowed in the land you loved.'*

By courtesy of SIR JOHN ARKWRIGHT

I. FRANCE AND BELGIUM CAMPAIGN, 1939-1940

ARMY NUMBER	RANK AND NAME	DATE
406141	Trooper George COURTNEY	27.5.40
554276	L'Serjeant Russell H. COWARD	29.5.40
761452	Warrant Officer William D. DENNESS	24.5.40
6112	Major James HAWKER	4.6.40
402548	Serjeant James HUBBARD	25.5.40
782227	Trooper Thomas H. LOHRENZ	25.5.40
316426	Trooper David R. LOW	25.5.40
5109660	Trooper James W. MINCHER	27.5.40
408101	Trooper James OLIVER	25.5.40
7882335	Trooper Alfred E. PRITCHARD	27.5.40
2566142	L'Corporal William H. TAYLOR	27.5.40
7882345	Trooper John THOMAS	—.5.40
558479	Trooper Frederick WATSON	—.—.40
407325	L'Corporal John T. WILEMAN	29.5.40
7880447	Corporal Jack WILLIAMS	—.5.40
546492	L'Serjeant William J. WOODARD	12.5.40

II. MIDDLE EAST

552825	Trooper William DE LOOZE	3.5.44
172922	Lieutenant Michael A. RITCHIE	6.4.43
198611	Lieutenant Philip G. TURNER	24.10.42

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

III. NORTH AFRICA

ARMY NUMBER	RANK AND NAME	DATE
123772	Lieutenant John E. BERTIE	9.5.43
6174	Lt.-Colonel Desmond French BLAKE	31.5.43
39314	Major William F. BUTLER	18.1.43

IV. ITALY

166298	Lieutenant Robert H. S. BROGDEN	12.9.44
--------	---------------------------------	---------

V. WESTERN EUROPE, 1944-1945

14438023	Trooper Walter H. ARNOLD	8.9.44
14425607	Trooper John ATKINSON	6.6.44
14668463	Trooper Raymond J. BANKS	29.8.44
7962853	Trooper Stanley W. J. BANNARD	22.7.44
7902089	Trooper Thomas E. BARNARD	19.1.45
14242497	Trooper James W. N. BAXENDALE	28.3.45
4742615	Serjeant Alfred A. BEARDSHALL	30.7.44
407779	Trooper Sydney BEATTIE	25.10.44
3715334	Trooper Alfred B. BELL	30.7.44
14263661	Trooper Albert J. BELSON	9.9.44
4201568	Corporal Bernard F. BESTWICK	10.6.44
5054181	Serjeant Reginald C. BLAKE	10.6.44
14401804	Trooper Harry W. BONE	—9.44
7899446	Corporal Ernest D. BOOKER	6.6.44
7935083	Serjeant Frank BRADLEY	20.1.45
7951961	Trooper Benjamin T. BRAZIER	30.7.44
4121366	Trooper Francis D. BROADHURST	12.3.45
14249780	Trooper Frederick J. BROWN	10.8.44
14260444	Trooper Russell W. C. BURGOYNE	10.8.44
14314422	Trooper John CAMPBELL	10.6.44
14255645	Trooper Robert CARMICHAEL	12.3.45
14261994	Trooper Harold CHALLIS	6.8.44
4543113	Trooper William COCKERHAM	30.8.44
14243040	Trooper Thomas COWEN	24.2.45
7938920	Corporal John CRAVEN	18.7.44
14254749	Trooper Vincent A. CROOK	8.7.45

APPENDIX VIII

V. WESTERN EUROPE, 1944-1945 (contd.)

ARMY NUMBER	RANK AND NAME	DATE
14710385	Trooper William CUMBES	6.3.45
408651	Trooper John W. CUMMINGS	7.3.45
3715794	Trooper John CUNLIFFE	10.6.44
14274113	Trooper Gordon T. DART	30.8.44
64567	Major James P. DELIUS	18.7.44
406294	Serjeant Stanley G. DIVER, M.M.	19.1.45
14355498	Trooper Albert E. DODSON	3.8.44
7949981	Trooper Barry G. DOSWELL	9.8.44
14368896	Trooper Leslie S. D. DOWELL	29.8.44
4543389	Trooper John E. DWYER	17.2.45
3715223	Corporal Frank EDISBURY	12.3.45
14406806	Trooper Harry EVANS	30.8.44
4540052	L'Corporal Horace W. FISHER	24.2.45
14300257	Trooper Reginald W. FLETCHER	12.3.45
14326768	Trooper Thomas J. M. FORBES	28.3.45
7899471	L'Corporal Frederick W. FORD	9.8.44
4542780	Trooper Victor FORREST	15.2.45
14246969	L'Corporal Edward FRASER	6.3.45
548619	Bandsman William G. FULLBROOK	6.6.44
7906674	Trooper James GARDNER	21.1.45
3716040	L'Serjeant Joseph GILLIBRAND	6.6.44
4543977	Trooper Frederick W. GASCOIGNE	6.6.44
14425628	Trooper Paul J. B. GOSLING	29.8.44
319535	Trooper Cecil J. GOUGH	15.2.45
5733700	Trooper Thomas E. GRAY	10.6.44
14278152	Trooper John T. GREEN	6.6.44
14254575	Trooper Wilfred B. HADWIN	6.8.44
14251178	Trooper Ronald HALL	29.8.44
197989	Lieutenant Bernard T. HARDY, M.M.	14.6.44
38712	Lt.-Colonel Richard T. G. HARRAP	15.6.44
14231236	Trooper Richard HASKAYNE	6.8.44
7882054	Serjeant Ronald N. HEPPER, M.M.	24.2.45
14274152	Trooper Victor HIGGS	9.8.44
7940055	L'Serjeant George A. HIND, M.M.	5.8.44

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

V. WESTERN EUROPE, 1944-1945 (*contd.*)

ARMY NUMBER	RANK AND NAME	DATE
14224809	Trooper Ronald T. HINE	10.6.44
7671245	Trooper Stephen F. HITCHCOX	15.2.45
14249808	Trooper Frederick G. HOCKLEY	6.6.44
14231955	Trooper William H. HOLLANDS	27.6.44
7946132	Trooper James D. S. HORSMAN	15.2.45
7938881	Corporal John E. HOYLE	10.6.44
14236054	Trooper Harry HUGHES	6.6.44
4198321	Corporal William E. JACKSON	9.8.44
7663819	Trooper Donald R. JAMIESON	9.8.44
555079	Serjeant Ernest KENLEY	21.1.45
3715833	L'Corporal Lloyd KERSHAW	6.6.44
3715996	Trooper John E. KNAGG	13.6.44
14274075	Trooper Harold KNEALE	10.8.44
6148356	Trooper Raymond H. F. KNIGHT	29.8.44
14258305	Trooper Albert LATHAM	—.8.44
4076691	Corporal William A. LEE, M.M.	15.6.44
405982	L'Corporal Percy James LEWIS	18.7.44
14243089	Trooper Charles LOVELL	6.6.44
184925	Captain Clark Anthony W. P. LYON	18.7.44
117039	Captain Peter E. L. LYON, M.C.	2.8.44
4802281	Trooper John S. MADDISON	21.12.45
7952655	Trooper Andrew MARSHALL	3.4.45
5962282	Trooper Ronald F. MASON	19.1.45
14653026	Trooper John MASON	28.3.45
7952174	Trooper Jack S. MAXWELL	28.3.45
407313	Corporal John J. MEARS	30.8.44
7945132	Trooper Francis J. MIDGLEY	21.1.45
14348700	Trooper Edward MILLER	6.6.44
7884193	Trooper Alfred MINSHULL	3.8.44
7947225	Trooper Nicholas MITSIALIS	12.3.45
14712977	Trooper Thomas MORRIS	12.3.45
7880047	Serjeant Donald MURCHISON	18.7.44
14430981	Trooper Cecil N. MURLEY	18.6.44
406131	Serjeant Charles NORRIS	6.6.44

APPENDIX VIII

V. WESTERN EUROPE, 1944-1945 (*contd.*)

ARMY NUMBER	RANK AND NAME	DATE
401523	Serjeant Robert J. O'BRIEN	25.7.44
4192628	Trooper John K. OWENS	10.6.44
529194	Warrant Officer Robert A. PARK	6.8.44
7674924	L'Corporal John PARR	30.7.44
7906832	Corporal Kenneth PENDLEBURY	22.7.44
330115	Trooper John PERRY	16.6.44
14277241	Trooper Robert R. PICKARD	6.6.44
14248562	Corporal Frederick T. PINK	29.8.44
14544567	Trooper Cyril J. PLANT	11.4.46
5891082	Trooper Norman RAYNOR	12.6.44
4397212	Trooper Stanley READ	21.1.45
14348726	L'Corporal John G. ROBINSON	6.6.44
14435656	Trooper Joseph W. ROBINSON	9.9.44
14228276	Trooper Frederick R. SAYCE	10.6.44
406413	Serjeant Frederick E. SCAMP	12.2.45
14278287	Trooper Cecil SCHOFIELD	6.6.44
14325049	Trooper Charles SEARLE	12.3.45
6349102	Trooper Arthur E. SHAKESHAFT	1.4.45
316544	Serjeant Christopher SHEEHAN	21.1.45
4750233	Trooper Robert A. SHIPLEY	2.11.44
5052774	L'Serjeant William J. SHORT	8.7.44
14376193	L'Corporal Harold SHUFFLEBOTHAM	10.6.44
3715841	Corporal Stanley SINGLETON	6.6.44
6142753	Trooper Frederick A. SITCH	21.1.45
14262311	Trooper Dennis R. SMITH	18.7.44
3715944	Trooper Harold SMITH	6.6.44
14598272	Trooper Eric SPAVEN	18.7.44
14248047	Trooper Eric L. STOATE	29.8.44
6354292	Trooper Francis E. SUREY	10.6.44
14346602	Trooper Walter H. SUTHERLAND	6.3.45
14368280	Trooper Cyril SYMONS	28.3.45
7952631	Trooper Frank N. TAPLEY	28.3.45
14273109	Trooper Matthew M. TELFORD	6.6.44
325327	Trooper Albert TOTTEN	10.6.44

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

V. WESTERN EUROPE, 1944-1945 (*contd.*)

ARMY NUMBER	RANK AND NAME	DATE
14276120	Trooper Barry C. J. WALDEN	24.2.45
140963	Captain John I. H. WARDLAW	9.8.44
14497584	Trooper George A. WEBBER	15.2.45
14431502	Trooper Max WEINER	23.6.44
7880334	Serjeant William WEIR	1.8.44
14367307	Trooper Norman WHITTAKER	6.6.44
3715507	Trooper Robert B. WILCOX	12.2.45
14323116	Trooper Gerard F. WILTON	30.8.44
4868778	Trooper Frank WOOD	12.3.45
14429703	L'Corporal Richard S. WOODCOCK	27.7.44

VI. UNITED KINGDOM

—	Lt.-Colonel Hugh C. AYSCOUGH	13.2.40
7888870	L'Corporal Douglas E. CORK	18.4.41
7879445	Serjeant Christopher CROSSWELL	14.12.42
3715928	Trooper George W. GARLICK	13.6.41
7882673	Trooper Herbert HARRIS	25.1.41
3780011	Trooper William McKENZIE	9.3.46
4544094	Trooper Edwin N. RICKATSON	10.5.44
—	Colonel James J. RICHARDSON, D.S.O.	14.4.42
404143	Trooper Thomas J. C. RINGER	25.7.40
408012	Trooper James SHEPHERD	29.3.41
7881037	Trooper Cecil B. G. STANHOPE	25.1.41
4626893	Corporal Francis UNDERHAY	1.3.44

Appendix 1x

13TH/18TH ROYAL HUSSARS (Q.M.O.) AID SOCIETY

BOTH the 13th Hussars Aid Society and the 18th Hussars Aid Society were formed in 1910-11.

At a Meeting held on the 24th of March, 1930, with Brigadier A. H. M. Taylor, D.S.O. (late 13th Hussars) in the Chair and the following members present: Colonel The Hon. H. C. S. Davey, C.M.G. (late 18th Hussars), Lieutenant-Colonel W. Holdsworth (late 13th/18th Hussars), Mr. W. J. Franks (late 18th Hussars) and Mr. F. W. Watts (late 18th Hussars)—the amalgamation of the two Societies was agreed in principle and the actual amalgamation of the two funds, as far as management was concerned, took place that year.

But the Charity Commissioners had to be consulted as to the administration of the Trust Funds (see Note), and it was not till May, 1934, that the final scheme for amalgamation could be approved.

The principle object was to ensure that the Trust monies should not become 'dead' owing to lack of applications for help from either 13th or 18th Hussars. Any balance not required for men of the two Regiments was set free for men of the 13th/18th Hussars.

The objects of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Q.M.O.) Aid Fund are:

1. To assist past members of the 13th Hussars, 18th Hussars, and 13th/18th Royal Hussars, and present members of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars who are in need of assistance by helping:

(a) Discharged soldiers to establish themselves in civil life.

(b) Discharged soldiers, their wives, families or immediate dependents, in circumstances of hardship or distress.

(c) Serving soldiers of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars, their wives or families under exceptional circumstances on the recommendation of the Commanding Officer or other competent serving officer. In the event of the Regiment going abroad and no serving officers being available, the case to be dealt with by the visiting officer.

2. The Colonel of the Regiment shall be President *ex officio*. All officers who have commanded the 13th Hussars, the 18th Hussars or the 13th/18th Royal Hussars shall be Vice-Presidents *ex officio*.

3. The Fund shall be managed by a Committee.

13TH/18TH ROYAL HUSSARS (Q.M.O.) AID SOCIETY

4. The address of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars Aid Society shall be given to all men on their discharge from the Regiment—92, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.1.

The Regiment is a Member of the Cavalry Benefit Association (C.B.A.). This Association was formed in 1911 and has as its main object the assistance of ex-members of those Cavalry Regiments who are Members of the Association.

Miss Florence Cross, M.B.E., has been Secretary of both the Cavalry Benefit Association and the 13th/18th Royal Hussars Aid Society from their inception. She has devoted practically the whole of her life to the work of assisting the ex-Cavalry soldier and this history would not be complete if due tribute were not paid to her devoted and unselfish work on behalf of so many of the soldiers and families of the Regiment. Her name will be remembered as a true and loyal member of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars.

NOTE: *13th/18th Royal Hussars Trust Funds:—*

1. The COTTAGE HOMES for disabled soldiers of the 18th Hussars founded by deed of gift dated 25th October, 1906.
2. The 18th (Queen Mary's Own) HUSSARS AID SOCIETY TRUST FUND founded by Indenture dated 10th December, 1924.
3. The FRANCIS DALE TAGART FUND founded by Indenture dated 27th April, 1925.
4. The 13th HUSSARS AID SOCIETY TRUST FUND founded by Indenture dated 20th April, 1925.

Appendix x

13TH/18TH ROYAL HUSSARS (Q.M.O.) OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION

PRIOR to the amalgamation of the two Regiments in 1922 both the 13th Hussars and the 18th Hussars operated Old Comrades Associations. That of the 13th Hussars was known as the '13th Hussars Old Comrades Dinner Club' and that of the 18th Hussars as the '18th Hussars Old Comrades Association'. These Associations were financed by a small annual subscription from members who had left their respective regiments for civil life. The Associations were run for purely social functions, usually an annual re-union dinner, which took place in London.

With the exception of the years of the two World Wars, these re-union dinners have been held each year.

On January 22nd, 1930, a meeting with Colonel E. C. Jury, C.M.G., M.C. (late 18th Hussars) in the Chair, vice Colonel W. Pepys, D.S.O., O.B.E. (late 13th Hussars, who was absent owing to illness) and composed of ex-members of the two Regiments unanimously agreed that the Old Comrades Associations be amalgamated to be known in future as the 13th/18th Hussars (later 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Q.M.O.) Old Comrades Association). Lieutenant-General Lord Baden-Powell, then Colonel of the Regiment, agreed to become President.

The Association is now run by a Committee and the Colonel of the Regiment is *ex officio* President. Members pay a small annual subscription and in 1947 it was agreed that Other Ranks could become Life Members of the Association on payment of a fixed sum.

The first annual re-union dinner after the Second World War was held at the Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, High Holborn, in 1946. Brigadier J. N. Lumley, C.B.E., M.C. – Colonel of the Regiment presided and two hundred and seventy Officers and Other Rank Members were present.

Index

HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI

Broadcast to Empire	33
Visits Regiment	62
Inspects Regiment	88
At Victory March	171

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH

At Victory March	171
----------------------------	-----

HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V

Appoints H.M. Queen Mary to be Colonel-in-Chief	5
Approves alliance with Canadian Hussars	6
Reviews troops on Laffan's Plain	9
Visits Regiment	9
Death of	21

HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY

Appointed Colonel-in-Chief	5
Presents Drum Banners	6
Visits Aldershot May 1923	9
Letter of sympathy to	21
Reply from	21
Visits Regiment July 1939	30
Letter from	31
Presents scarves to Officers	36
Inspects Regiment June 1940	66
At Victory March	171

H.R.H. The Duke of

GLOUCESTER	36
----------------------	----

ABBEVILLE

.	43
-----------	----

AEERSCHOT

.	131
-----------	-----

AFRIDI COUNTRY

.	17
-----------	----

AHLHORN

.	162
-----------	-----

AIRBORNE DIVISION, 1st

.	137-138
-----------	---------

AIRBORNE DIVISION, 6th

102, 103, 105, 106, 110, 169	
------------------------------	--

AIRE

.	48
-----------	----

AITCHISON, Lieut.

.	150
-----------	-----

AIX

.	47
-----------	----

AKERS-DOUGLAS, Lieut.

Examines Sgt. Hubbard's tank	49
--	----

Wounded	112
-------------------	-----

ALANBROOK, Field Marshal

.	38, 171
-----------	---------

ALBERT CANAL

.	131, 132
-----------	----------

ALDAM, Capt. J. H.

.	114, 135
-----------	----------

ALDE, Exercise

.	79
-----------	----

ALDERSHOT

18th Hussars arrive	5
Regiment at	6-10
Royal visit to	9
Regiment leaves	10
Tank trials at	12
H.Q. 1st Division	27
Adm. Echelons at	85
Regiment arrives at	174

ALEXANDER, Field Marshal Viscount

Commands Nowshera Brigade	16
Commands 1st Division	27
Visits Regiment, Shorncliffe	30
Holds exercise near Somme	35
Orders advance to River Dyle	38
Gives permission to withdraw	40
Lieut. Wormald reports to	45
At Dunkirk	54
Orders evacuation	55
In North Africa	70
At Victory March	171

ALLAN, Trooper

.	148
-----------	-----

ALPON

.	158, 169
-----------	----------

ALTENAU

.	170
-----------	-----

AMAYE-SUR-SEULLES

.	118
-----------	-----

AMIENS

.	43, 127
-----------	---------

'ANCHOR' EXERCISE

.	81
-----------	----

ANDERSON, Lieut.

.	123
-----------	-----

ANHOLT

.	161
-----------	-----

ANTWERP

128, 129, 143, 144, 148	
-------------------------	--

ARDENNES

.	148, 153
-----------	----------

ARGENES

.	114, 124-125
-----------	--------------

ARMOURED BRIGADE, 4th

.	64
-----------	----

ARMOURED BRIGADE, 8th

Regiment joins	117
--------------------------	-----

Attack on Mount Pincon	118
----------------------------------	-----

Operations in France	125-128
--------------------------------	---------

Reach Objectives	146
----------------------------	-----

C.-in-C., visits	147
----------------------------	-----

With 30 Corps	153
-------------------------	-----

Artillery bombardment	154
---------------------------------	-----

Regiment reverts to command of	166
--	-----

History of	168
----------------------	-----

ARMOURED BRIGADE, 27th

Part of 9th Armoured Div.	63
-----------------------------------	----

Regiment part of	68
----------------------------	----

Regiment remains under	74
----------------------------------	----

Units of	85
--------------------	----

INDEX

ARMoured BRIGADE, 27th <i>continued</i>	BAISIEUX	38, 128
Commanded by Brig. Prior-	BAJAUR	16
Palmer	BALACLAVA	
Regiment with	Last Survivor	11
In Normandy fighting	Celebration of	36
Broken up	BARKER, Lieut.-General	37
Regiment with	BARNARD CASTLE	74
ARMoured BRIGADE, 29th	BARRETT, C. R. B.	1, 3
" " 33rd	BARRETT, Capt. J. L. M.	8
ARMoured DIVISION, 7th	'BATTLEAXE', H.M.S.	92
Under 8 Corps	BAUCHEM	146, 147
In Normandy fighting	BAWINKEL	162
Regiment under command of	BAYES, Sjt.	18
ARMoured DIVISION, 8th	BAYEAUX	117
Under 8 Corps	BEAUVAIS	127
ARMoured DIVISION, 9th	BEDBURG	155-157
Formed	BEERINGEN	131
Regiment leaves	BELCHER, 2nd Lieut.	128
ARMoured DIVISION, 11th	BELL, Capt.	52
Under 8 Corps	BENGHAZI	173
In Normandy Fighting	BENIFONTAINE	128
Losses	BENOUVILLE	105, 106, 110
Leads 2nd Army	BERG	144
Advance with 30 Corps	BERLIN	172
Ordered to Antwerp	BETHELL, Lieut.	157
ARMoured DIVISION, 79th	BEVERLOO	131
Regiment under command of	BIXSCHOOTE	53
Supervises special training	'BLACKCOCK', OPERATION	
D.D. training under	148-153	
ARMoured RECCE BRIGADE, 1st	BLACK WATCH	50, 51, 107
Regiment forms part of	BLUCHER, MARSHAL	4
Reconstituted	BOCAGE COUNTRY	117-118
ARMY, BRITISH, 2nd	BOIS DE BAVENT	110, 115
ARMY EDUCATION CORPS	BONAPARTE, KING JOSEPH	63
ARMY GROUP, 21st	BOOTH, 2nd Lieut.	128
Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery	BOULOGNE	48
takes command	BOURG LEOPOLD	134, 136
German Forces surrender to	BOURGBUS	114, 115, 116
ARNHEM	BOVINGTON	61
Battle of	BRADLEY, General Omar	
ARRAS	Views exercise	80
ASSCHE-ENGHIEN ROAD	Commands 1st U.S. Army	104
AUBERGE	BRADLEY, Sjt.	152
BAD HARZBURG	BRANDON	66
BADEN-POWELL, Lt.-Gen. Lord	BRAY DUNES	53
Presents Drum Banners	BREMEN	162, 163, 166
Writes Foreword Regtl. Journal	BREMERHAVEN	163
Celebrates 50th Anniversary	BREST	34
Risalpur visit	BREVILLE	107
Death	BREVILLE WOODS	106

INDEX

BRIGADE, 16th	157	CHAMBERLAIN, NEVILLE	25
„ 129th	163	CHANTEPIE	119
„ 130th	137, 138, 155, 160, 162	CHARLEROI	130
„ 155th	166	CHATEAU D'ANISY	112
„ 157th	166	CHATEAU DE LA LONDE	112
„ 158th	79	CHEAL, Trooper	46
„ 176th	112	CHENAB	17
„ 214th	161, 162, 163	CHERBOURG	113
'BROADSWORD', H.M.S.	92	CHESHIRE REGIMENT	42
BROCAS-BURROWS, Maj.-Gen.	63	CHETWODE, Field Marshal, Lord	10
BROWN, Major	86	CHIPPENHAM CAMP	67
BRUEL	39	CHRYSTALL, Major	24
BRUNSWICK	168, 172	CHURCHILL, WINSTON	
BRUNSUM	144	Sounds Alarm	25
BRUSSELS	38, 42, 128, 130	Speech 14.7.40	60
'BUMPER', EXERCISE	65	Crosses Rhine	160
BURDER, Lieut.		At Victory March	171
Succeeds R.S.M. Loader	21	CLAIRMARAIS	49
Becomes Quartermaster	32	CLAMESNIL	125
Leaves Regiment	66	CLARK, Maj.-General	32
BURDER, Mrs.	37	CLEVE	153, 155
BURGESS, Lieut.	(note) 97	CLEVE, FOREST OF	156
BURGHEAD BAY	83	CLOPPENBURG	162
BURNETT, Maj.-General	2	COBB, Major	10
BURNETT-STUART, Lieut.-Gen.		COKER, Lieut.	106, 128
Sir John	14	COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER	102, 104, 105, 107
BUSH, Captain	98	COMINES	50, 51
BUTLER, Major		COOPER, Sgt.	
As a polo player	20	Mentioned	42
Leaves Regiment	69	Destroys enemy tanks	109
Killed in Action	69	CORBEEK-DYLE	39, 41
BUTTE DE LA HOGUE 109, 115-116		CORDY-SIMPSON, Major	
CAEN	104-105, 111, 112, 169	As polo player	20
CAEN CANAL	106	Commands 'C' Sqn.	39
CAIRO CAVALRY BRIGADE	13	Relinquishes 'C' Sqn.	40
CALAIS	48, 130	Commands 'C' Sqn.	47
CAMBRAI	35	Commands 'A' and 'B' Echelons	52
CAMERON, Captain	116	On Dunkirk beach	54, 57
CAMERONS, 5th	108	Commands H.Q. Sqn.	68
CANADIAN ARMY, 1st	111, 160	Commands Transport Echelons	95
CANADIAN BRIGADE, 9th	154, 156, 160	CORFE	61
CANADIAN DIVISION, 1st	169	CORNHILL	63
„ „ 3rd 153, 169		CORNWALL, Lieut.	116
CARTER, Sgt.-Major	44	CORPS 1	112, 114
CASSEL	48	„ 8	114, 115
CAUSEBROOK, Sgt.	86	„ 12	61, 124, 148
CAVALRY BRIGADE, 1st	6	„ 30 117, 124, 125, 126, 127, 137, 145, 147, 148, 153, 160, 170.	
CAZELLE	111, 112-113, 114	CORRIN, Temp.-Lieut. R.N.V.R.	96
CHALONS-SUR-SAONE	130		

INDEX

COTENTIN	113	DIVISION, 50th	52, 53, 118, 128, 168, 169
COTTER, Major	152	„ 51st	106, 107, 108, 110, 156, 160, 168, 169
COTTON, Sir Stapleton	4	„ 52nd	148, 149, 163, 166, 169
COULOMBS	117	„ 53rd	. . . 156, 169
COWARD, Sgt.	53	„ 59th	. . . 111, 169
CRITCHLEY, Captain	20	DORSETSHIRE REGIMENT, 4th	147, 155, 156, 169
CROMBEKE	53	DORSETSHIRE REGIMENT, 5th	147, 155, 161, 169
'CROWN', EXERCISE	81	DORTMUND-EMS CANAL	161
CUMTICH	40	DOUAI	38
'CUPID', EXERCISE	81	DOULLENS	127
'CUTLASS', H.M.S.	92	DOVER HARBOUR	55
CUVERVILLE	109, 115	DOWNER, Lieut.	
		Tank destroyed	112
'DAIMLER'	100, 101	Wounded	123
DAVIES, Maj.		DRAGOON GUARDS, 4th-7th	39, 40, 49, 64, 68, 74, 85, 117, 126, 156
At Leefdael	39	DRIEL	144
Under 5th Division	43	DRIVER, Sgt.	152
Movements 18-19 May, 1940	44-45	DROGHEDA, Earl of	2
Regiment reformed	47	DRUM BANNERS	
Commands remaining Sqn.	52	Display Battle-Honours	1, 4
Wounded and Captured	53	Royal School of Needlework	6
DAVIES, Cpl.	121	Presented	22
DE GROOT	137	DUKE OF CORNWALL'S LIGHT INFANTRY	169
DEKKERSWALT	143	DUNKERLY, Lieut.-Colonel	
DELAVAL COTTER, Major Sir		Assumes Command	112
Mistaken for Moroccan	54	Attack on Mont Pincon	121
'A' Sqn. Leader	68	Evacuated to England	144
DELMENHORST	162	Resumes command	167
DEMPSEY, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Miles	105	Retires	172
DENDRE RIVER	38, 43, 44, 45	Awarded D.S.O.	172
DENNESS, Sgt.-Major	49	DUNKIRK 50, 52, 53, 55, 58, 61, 129	
DENNY, Captain N. N. M.		DURAND, Sir Mortimer	1
Tank sinks	82	DUREN	145
Rescued from sea	99	DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY, 6th	123, 128
Attack on Mont Pincon	118-119	DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY, 8th	123, 126
At Fourges	127	DYLE RIVER	38, 39, 40, 41, 42
DENNY, Captain W. G.		EAST LANCASHIRE REGT., 1st	94
On D-day	100, 101	EAST RIDING YEOMANRY	68, 74, 85, 104, 114
At Waldefeucht	151	EAST YORKSHIRE REGT. 94, 100, 101	
In Victory March	171	EDINBURGH	10, 11
DIEPPE	71, 143	EGHAM	76
DIEPENHEIM	161		
DIEST	131		
DILL, Field Marshal Sir John	36		
DINING-TABLE,			
King Joseph Bonaparte's	3		
DIVISION, 1st	53, 168		
„ 3rd	169		
„ 43rd	118, 125, 126, 137, 144, 145, 146, 155, 159, 168, 169		

INDEX

EGYPT	13-15	FROGHILL	75
EINDHOVEN	137	FURNESS, Lieut.	
EISENHOWER, General		Attacks enemy	40
Commands in N. Africa	70	Mentioned	42
Visits Regiment	88	Attacks enemy	49
EL ALAMEIN	70	Tank hit	51
ELBE	166	At Dunkirk	57
ELLERY, Lieut.-Colonel	32		
ELLIOTT, Lieut.		GALE, Capt.	126
In Mont Pincon Attack	119-122	GEILENKIRCHEN	145, 147, 153
ELLEZELLES	45	GENERAL STRIKE	10
EPERON	112	GHORA DAKA	20
EPPING	62	GILRATH	145, 146
ELST	138	GISORS	127
EMMERICH	160	GOCH	153, 155, 156, 157, 159
EMS, RIVER	161	GOFF, Sjt.	12, 15
'ENIGMA', EXERCISE	76	GONDECOURT	128
ESCAUT	38, 41, 137	GOOR	161
ESCAUT CANAL	137	GORT, Field Marshal, Lord	58
ESCAUT RIVER	45	GOSFIELD PARK	61
ESCOVILLE		GOSPORT	79, 85-87
107, 108, 109, 115, 116, 169		'GRAB', EXERCISE	81
EVERBERG	42	GRAHAM, Maj.-General	118
'FABIUS', EXERCISE	87	GRAMMONT	44
FALAISE	113-116, 124, 126	GRANT, Maj.-General	4
FELIXSTOWE	76	GRAVE	137
FEVERSHAM, Lieut.-Col. The Earl of		GRAY, Bernard	36
Commands Regiment	107	GRENADIER GUARDS, 3rd	51
Reverts to 2nd I/C	112	GRENTHVILLE	115, 116
Becomes Lieut.-Colonel	144	GUARDS ARMoured DIVISION	
Leaves Regiment	167	115, 127, 128, 137, 159	
Credit due to	173	GUIDES CAVALRY	22
FFRENCH-BLAKE, Captain	19	GUYVELDE	53
FIELD REGIMENT, 17th	46		
FLEURBAIX	48, 49	HAMMOND, Cpl.	120
FLOBECQ	45, 46	HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT	
FLOOD, Lieut.	155	155, 156, 161, 169	
FOLKESTONE	60	HANNAH, Captain	95
FORCE 'S'	91	HANOVER	166, 167, 168
FORET DE CLAIRMARAIS	48, 49	HAMME MILLE	40
FORET DE GOUFFERN	126	HARDING, Lieut.	75-76
FORET DE NIEPPE	49	HARDY, Lieut.	106
FORT GEORGE	81, 83, 84, 85	HARDY, Sjt.	115
FOURGES	127	HARRAP, Lieut.-Colonel	
FOX, Trooper	41	As polo player	20
FRANKLYN, Maj.-General	43	Adjutant	55
FRANKS, Lieut.		Second in command	68
Fine work by	115	Takes command	86
At Waldefeucht	150	Killed	107
FRENCH ARMoured DIVISION	126	Credit due to	173
FRITTON LAKE	74, 76, 78	HARMAN, Col. Commandant	6
		HARWICH	174

INDEX

HARZ MOUNTAINS	170, 172	Visit of Lord Baden-Powell	11
HASELUNNE	162	Commanded by Col. Richardson	23
HATTERATH	146	Death of Lord Baden-Powell	63
HAU	156	HUSSARS, 14th-20th	21
HAWKER, Major		„ 15th-19th	39
Runs beagles	11	„ 18th	
Master of Hounds	20	Formation	2
At River Dyle	39	Foreign Service	2-4
Commands 'B' Sqn.	47	Arrive Aldershot	5
Dies of wounds	52	Alliance with Dominions	6
HECHTEL	137	Commanded by Col. Commandant	
'HEDGEHOG', EXERCISE	79	Harman	6
HEINSBERG	145, 153	IMMENDORF	170
HELPS, Canon Arthur	30	INDIA	15-26
HENGEL	161	INFANTRY BRIGADE, 3rd	39
HERMANVILLE-SUR-MER		„ „ 8th	94, 104, 114, 115
100, 104, 105, 110		„ „ 9th	104, 114
HERMON, Lieut.-Colonel	172	„ „ 56th	118
HIGHLAND LIGHT INFANTRY,		„ „ 69th	118
6th	166	„ „ 129th	118, 145, 147
'HILLMAN'	103, 104	„ „ 150th	50, 53
HILTON, Mrs.	37	„ „ 151st	123, 128
HIND, R.S.M.		„ „ 152nd	108
Appointed	68	„ „ 160th	158
Commands Exercise	76	„ „ 176th	111, 112
Great efficiency	173	„ „ 185th	104, 114
HIRSCH, Maj.	20	„ „ 214th	147
HOBART, Maj.-General	68, 80	„ „ 231st	118
HOCHEID	146, 147	INFANTRY DIVISION, 1st	129
HODDOM CASTLE	79, 80	„ „ 3rd	114
HOLDSWORTH, Colonel		„ „ 5th	168
Commands 18th Hussars	5	INNISKILLINGS	42
In attendance on H.M. Queen		INVERNESS	81, 83
Mary	9	'ISLAND', The	141, 144
Succeeds Lieut.-Col. Twist	10	ISSUM	159
Retires	13	JACKSON, Cpl.	112
HOLLESLEY HEATH	75	JAMIESON, Lieut.	128
HOPKINS, Bandmaster	21	JAMMU STATE	16
HORROCKS, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Brian		JENNISON, Lieut.	
124, 127, 167, 168		At Mont Pincon	121, 122
HOST	157, 158	Killed	128
HOWARD-VYSE, Brig.	13	JERVIS, Trooper	132
HUBBARD, Sgt.	49	JULICH	145
HUGHES, Sgt.-Major	11	KARACHI	15, 25
HULL, Maj.-General	168	KASHMIR	16
HUNTER, Lieut.	123	KEMMEL	50
HUSSARS, 11th	14	KEMP, Corp.	132
„ 13th			
Formation	1		
Foreign Service	2-4		
Lieut.-Col. Twist joins	10		

INDEX

KENNEDY, Lieut.-Colonel	LLOYD, Maj. L. S.	7
Commands Regiment	LOOMBEEK	42
Promoted	LOTHIAN & BORDER HORSE	69
KEVELAER	LOUVAIN	144
KING'S OWN SCOTTISH BOR-	LOVAT, Lord	101
DERERS, 5th	LUCAS LTD.	28
KING'S REGIMENT	LUC-SUR-MER	94, 110, 111
KING'S ROYAL RIFLE CORPS,	LUMLEY, Brigadier J. N.	
12th-60th	Promoted	13
KNOWLES, Lieut.	Work for Regiment	15
KONINGSBOSCH	Commands Meerut Cavalry Bde.	18
KRANENBURG	Succeeds Col. Richardson	67
	Visits Regiment	172
L'AIGLE	LUMSDEN, Lieut.-Col.	45
LA BASSEE CANAL	LUNEBURG	172
LA BIJUDE	LYNE, Maj.-General	111
LA BRECHE	LYON, Captain	
LA BRUYERE	Commands 'B' Sqn.	107
LAFFAN'S PLAIN	Returns to Squadron	113
LA HOUSOYE	Killed	123
LA LIVARD	LYON-CLARK, Captain	
LANCERS, 12th 13, 14, 38 40, 45, 50	Technical Adjutant	68
" 24th	Killed	116
LA PORILLIERE	MAAS	140
'LARGS', H.M.S.	MAASTRICHT	148
LA SENAUDIERE	MACDONALD, Brigadier	22
LA VARINIERE 120, 121, 122, 123	MACKENZIE KING, Mr.	171
LA VERDERIE 35, 38, 44, 45, 47, 128	MACLEAN, Col. Sir Fitzroy	22
'LEAP YEAR' EXERCISE	MAINZ	160
LECLERC, General	MALET, Col. Harold	2
LEEFDAEL	MANITOBA MOUNTED RIFLES	6
LEESE, Brigadier	MARTEL, Maj.-Gen. G. le Q.	52
LE MESNIL	MARYHILL BARRACKS	10
LE NIEPPE	MASON, Trooper	152
LEGERE MECHANIQUE DIV., 1st 56	MATERBORN	155, 156
" " " 2nd 50	MEERUT	69
LENS	MEERUT CAVALRY BRIGADE	18
LE PLESSIS GRIMOULT	MEMORIALS, REGIMENTAL 23, 24	
LESSINES	MENIN	50
LICHBROUGH	MENNELL, Sjt.	8
LIFE GUARDS SQUADRON	MEUSE, RIVER	144, 145, 148
LIGHT HORSE REGT., 8th	MEUSE-ESCAUT CANAL	137
" " " 18th	MIDHOPE RANGES	69
LION-SUR-MER	MILITIA	28, 30, 31
LILLE	MILLENGEN	161
LINGEN	MILLER, Maj.-General C.	
LINNEY HEAD	At Staff College	7
LINNICH	Assumes Command	24
LITTLEHAMPTON	Promoted	31
LOADER, R.S.M.	Visits Petworth	87
LOE AGRA		
LOFREY, Trooper		

INDEX

MILLER, Sjt.	NIJMEGEN	137, 141, 144, 153, 155
Inflicts casualties	NINOVE	38, 43, 130
Tank is hit	NOMAIN	48
MOHMAND COUNTRY	NORDHORN	161
MOLENHOEK	NORFOLK REGIMENT, 7th	112
MONCHY	NORMAN, Brigadier	61
MONMOUTHSHIRE REGT., 2nd	NORNTER	160
157, 158	NORRIS, Major	
MONTGOMERY, Field Marshal	Destroys enemy tanks	109
Viscount	Sent Berlin	172
Victory at El Alamein	NORTH AFRICA	70
Arrives Fort George	NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGI-	
Policy of	MENT, 7th	112
Plans regarding Caen	NORTH-WEST FRONTIER	16, 17
Message to Troops	NOTTINGHAM YEOMANRY	117
Views on Arnhem	NOWSHERA BRIGADE	16
Presents awards	NUTTERDEN	155
Despatch regarding Royal		
Armoured Corps	OGBOURNE ST. GEORGE	66
MOORE ABBEY	OGY	44, 46
MONT PINCON	OISE	43
118, 119, 122, 123, 129, 169, 172	OLD COMRADES	
MORAY FIRTH	Garden Party	30
MORRIS	Inspected by Queen Mary	66
MOSLEY, Captain	OLIVER, Trooper	49
MOULDING, Lieut.	OMAHA BEACH	105
Tank damaged	OOSTERHOOT	143
Dies of wounds	OPVELP	39
MOULTON-BARRETT, Lieut.-Col.	ORBOIS	118
Commands Regiments	ORFORD NESS	75, 76
Relinquishes command	ORNE, RIVER 94, 101, 103, 105, 106,	
MOUNTBATTEN, Lord Louis	110, 113, 117, 126, 129, 169	
MOY HALL	ORNE CANAL	105, 106
MULLENS, Brigadier G. J. de W.	OSBORNE BAY	80
MUNDEN, Brigadier R.	OUISTREHAM	94, 101, 111
	'OVERLORD'	87
NAMUR	OVERYSSCHE-VOSSEM	42
NEAVE, Captain J. A. S.		
As Adjutant	PANZERS, 21st S.S.	104
At Training exercise	PARA-BATTALION, 7th	106
NEAVE, Captain R. A. M.	" " 11th	106
On D-day	PARA-BRIGADE, 3rd	106
Loses tank	PARIS	126
* Good work of	PATTISHALL	63
NEDERBRAKEL	PAXTER-NYERI	63
NEDER RIJN	PECROT-CHAUSEE	39
NEEDE	PEGASUS BRIDGE	105
NIEDERBRUCH	PEMBROKE	75, 76
NEWCASTLE	'PERCY', EXERCISE	65
NEWMARKET	PERIERS	114
NIEDERHEIDE	PESHAWAR	18
	PESHAWAR BRIGADE	16

INDEX

PETWORTH	85-88	RENNIE, Maj.-General	81
PEERLESS, Lieut.	126	RESERVE	31
PEYTON, General Sir W.	12	RHINE	159, 160
'PHILCO', EXERCISE	81	RICHARDSON, Colonel	
'PHONEY WAR'	35	Succeeded by Brig. Lumley	18
PIONEER COMPANIES	31	Succeeds Lord Baden-Powell	23
PLANARD	47	Takes salute	33
PLESSIS GRIMOULT	123	Dies	67
PLOEGSTEERT WOOD	50	RICHSDEN	146
PLOEGSTEERT	52	RIDLEY, Cpl.	132
POPERINGHE	53	RISALPUR	6, 21, 22, 25
POLISH ARMoured DIVISION	124	RISALPUR CAVALRY BRIGADE	22
POLISH PARACHUTE BRIGADE	137	RITCHIE, Lieut.-General	148
POLO	19, 20	ROER RIVER	145, 148
POOLE	61	ROERMOND	145
PORTSMOUTH	87, 88, 90, 91	ROOTES GROUP	28
POTIGNY	124	ROUBAIX	36
PREBARON	115	ROYAL ARMoured CORPS	
PRICE, Corp.	148	104th Regiment	75
PRIOR-PALMER, Brigadier		147th „	147
Arrives from Sandhurst	74	148th „	110
Planning conference	85	ROYAL CANADIAN HUSSARS	6
Launches assault	98	ROYAL ENGINEERS	51, 126
Commands 8th Armoured Bgde.	117	ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY	
Regiment, Leaves command of	168		13, 22, 38, 51
PROVEN	53	ROYAL HUSSARS, 10th	6, 13, 69
PUTANGES	126	ROYALS	11
QUELKORN	163	ROYAL SCHOOL OF NEEDLE-	
QUICK, Sgt.-Major	76	WORK	6
QUICK, Mrs.	37	ROYAL SCOTS FUSILIERS	
RABJOHN, Regtl.-Sjt.-Maj.			152, 153, 169
Promotion	8	ROYAL TANK CORPS	32
Retires	13	ROYAL TANK REGIMENT	18
RAIKES, Colonel	86	ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS, 6th	157
RANVILLE	105	RUBIN, Cpl.	131
RATTLE, Sgt.		RUGGE-PRICE, Major	
Tank sinks	99	Leads 'B' Squadron	68
Tank damaged	121	D-day assault	94, 97
READ, Trooper	152	Second-in-Command	107
RECONNAISSANCE REGT., 43rd		Returns to Squadron	113
	154, 155	Second-in-Command	144
REDFORD BARRACKS	10	RUSSELL, Major	
REES	160, 161	To report to 5 Div. H.Q.	44
REGIMENT, 334th (U.S.)	167	Collects vehicles at Le Nieppe	49
REGIMENTAL JOURNAL	8	ST. AUBIN	105, 110, 111, 114
REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM,		ST. COME, CHATEAU DE	107
407th	144	ST. GERMAIN D'ECOL	118
REICHSWALD FOREST	153, 155	ST. HONORINE	108, 109, 110, 169
REMAGEN	160	ST. LO	113
RENAIX	38, 44, 45	ST. OMER	48
		SALISBURY PLAIN	10, 12

INDEX

SANNERVILLE	115	STAMFORD	64
SAONE VALLEY	130	STAVELE	53
SCHINNEN	148	STEWART, Lieut.	
SCHINVELD	148	Charges enemy	41
SCOTLAND	10-12	Missing	47
SEIGFREID LINE	145	STIRLING, Lieut.-Colonel	
SEINE	126, 129	In Army Jumping Team	11
SELWYN, Lieut.	41	Succeeds Lieut.-Col. Miller	31
SENNE RIVER	43	Sees Gen. Alexander	38
SHORNCLIFFE 12, 13, 26, 27, 33, 64		Withdraws across Dyle	40, 41
SIALKOT	15, 16, 21	Orders withdrawal over Senne	
SIALKOT CAVALRY BRIGADE	15	Bridge	43
SIDI REZEGH	64	Reports to Gen. Alexander	54
SINDEREN	161	Dunkirk evacuation	55, 56
SITTARD	149	Lands Folkestone	60
SKINNER'S HORSE	22	Goes to Middle East	64
SKIPTON	68	STOKES BAY	80, 89
'SMASH', EXERCISE	81	STREETER, Bandmaster, A. L.	21
SMITH, Lieut. E.		SUEZ	15
Describes attack on 'Morris'	102	SUFFOLK REGIMENT	
Wounded	152	94, 102, 103, 115	
SMITH, Butcher		SUSSEX	12
On Dunkirk Beach	54	SUSTEREN	149
Rides to Dunkirk	57	SWEETAPPLE, Sjt.	99
SMITH, Sjt.	152	SWEETING, Captain	
SMUTS, Field Marshal	171	Succeeds Lieut. Burder	66
'SOLE'	100, 101	As Quartermaster	68
SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY		Keeps Regiment supplied	134
21, 119, 122, 145, 147, 161, 169		SWORD, Major	
'SOMERSETSHIRE', H. M. T.	13, 15, 26	Becomes Second-in-command	31
SOMME	35, 43, 48, 127, 129	Collects vehicles from Le Nieppe	49
SOUTH DOWNS	88	TALBOT, Rear-Admiral	90
SOUTHAMPTON	13, 26, 33, 34	TANK BRIGADE, 34th	159
SOUTH LANCASHIRE REGT.	94, 100, 115	TAYLOR, Trooper	42
SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGT.	56	TERROT, Brigadier	15
SPANDAU	172	TERVUEREN	41
SPENCER, Lieut.	109	TEVEREN	145
SPENCER, Sjt.	86	'THET', EXERCISE	75
STAFFORDSHIRE YEOMANRY	85, 104, 114	THETFORD	64, 65, 68
STAHE	145, 147	THEYDON BOIS	62
STANCOMB, Major		THOMAS, Maj.-General	159
Reconnoitres Ypres/Comines		THORESBY Camp	65
Canal	52	THORNE, Maj.-General	47
Succeeded by Capt. Neave	68	THORNWOOD Camp	62
Rejoins Regiment	128	THURY-HARCOURT	124
Commands 'B' Squadron	144	TIRLEMONT	40
At Waldefeucht	149	TORFHAUS	170
Good work	152	TOUFLERS	44
		TOUFFREVILLE	115
		TOURNAI	38, 45, 46
		TOWCESTER	63, 64

INDEX

TOWNSHEND-GREEN, Lieut.		WELSTEAD, Major	
Joins Regiment	128	Returns from leave	39
Killed	144	Ordered to withdraw	40
TRANSJORDAN FRONTIER		Becomes Liaison Officer	47
FORCE	24	Collects vehicles from Le Nieppe	49
TRIPSRATH	146, 147	With Black Watch	51
TUNISIA	70	Experiences at Dunkirk	55
TURNER, Q.M.Sjt.	116	WESEL	160
TWIST, Lieut.-Col.		WESER	162, 166
Commands 13th Hussars	5	WESTMINSTER ABBEY	63
Completes command	10	WESTON, Cpl.	150
ULESTRATEN	147, 148	WEST WITTERING	64
UNDERHAY, Corpl.	82	WEURT	143
UNITED STATES AIRBORNE		WICKHAM MARKET	74, 76, 79
DIVISION, 82nd	137, 144	WILLINGDON, Lord	21
UNITED STATES AIRBORNE		WILSON, Field Marshal	172
DIVISION, 101st	137, 144	WILTSHIRE REGIMENT, 4th	
UNITED STATES ARMY, 1st	145	138, 145, 147, 156, 169	
" " " 3rd	160	WILTSHIRE REGIMENT, 5th	
" " " 9th	145, 160	119, 120, 121, 145, 146, 147	
UNITED STATES DIV., 84th		WINSEN	144
145, 146, 167		WISSEL	160
" " " 102nd	104, 160	WODECQ	44
URQUHART, Trooper	109	WOLFENBUTTEL	170
UTMAN KHEL COUNTRY	17	WOLTINGRODE	168
UTTLEY, Lieut.	115	WOOTTON-UNDER-EDGE	60
UXBRIDGE, Earl of	4	WORCESTERSHIRE REGT, 1st	162
VERNON	125, 126	WORMALD, Major D. B.	
VICTORY MARCH	171	At Tirlmont	40
VIENENBERG	168, 170	Experiences retiring to Tournai	45-46
VILLERS BOCAGE	117, 123	Commands 'A' Leading Troop	51
VINOIUT	114	Commands 'A' Sqn.	68
VIAN, Vice-Admiral Sir Philip	80	Role on D-day	94
VIVIAN, Sir Hussey	4	D-day assault	100
VLAMERTINGHE	50, 52	Destroys enemy tanks	109
VOORMEZELEE	50	Counter attacked	120
WAAL	140, 141	At Mont Pincon	121
WALDEFEUCHT 149, 151, 152, 153, 169		Leaves Regiment	162
WALKER, Captain	125	WORMALD, Capt. W.	
WARDLAW, Captain		D-day assault	101
Observes from tree	109	Joins 'C' Sqn.	126
Killed	123	WRIGHT, Temp. Sub-Lt., R.N.V.R.	97
WARNETON	51, 52	WURM RIVER	146
WARWICKSHIRE YEOMANRY	10	WYLER	154, 155, 169
WATERLOOVILLE	88	YORK, Sjt.	135
WATT, Lieut.	119, 120	YORKSHIRE HUSSARS	107
WEERT ST. GEORGE	41	YPRES	50, 53
WEERT	158	YPRES CANAL	49, 50, 51, 52
WELCH REGIMENT, 4th	157, 158	YSER	53
WELLINGTON, DUKE OF	4	ZEELAND	137
		ZYFFLICH	154, 169



PLATE 1. The Drum Banners of the Regiment



PLATE 2. Lieutenant-General The Lord BADEN-POWELL,
O.M., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.C.L., LL.D.

*From the pencil drawing by Augustus John, O.M., R.A.
in possession of the Officers' Mess*



PLATE 3. Her Majesty QUEEN MARY with the Officers and Warrant Officers
of the Regiment, SHORNCLIFFE, 15th July, 1939
By courtesy of Halksworth Wheeler Studios, Folkestone



PLATE 5. DUNKIRK BEACHES, 31ST MAY, 1940

From the painting by Charles Cundall, R.A., by courtesy of the Imperial War Museum



PLATE 6. Her Majesty QUEEN MARY inspects Her Regiment near MARLBOROUGH, 25th April, 1942

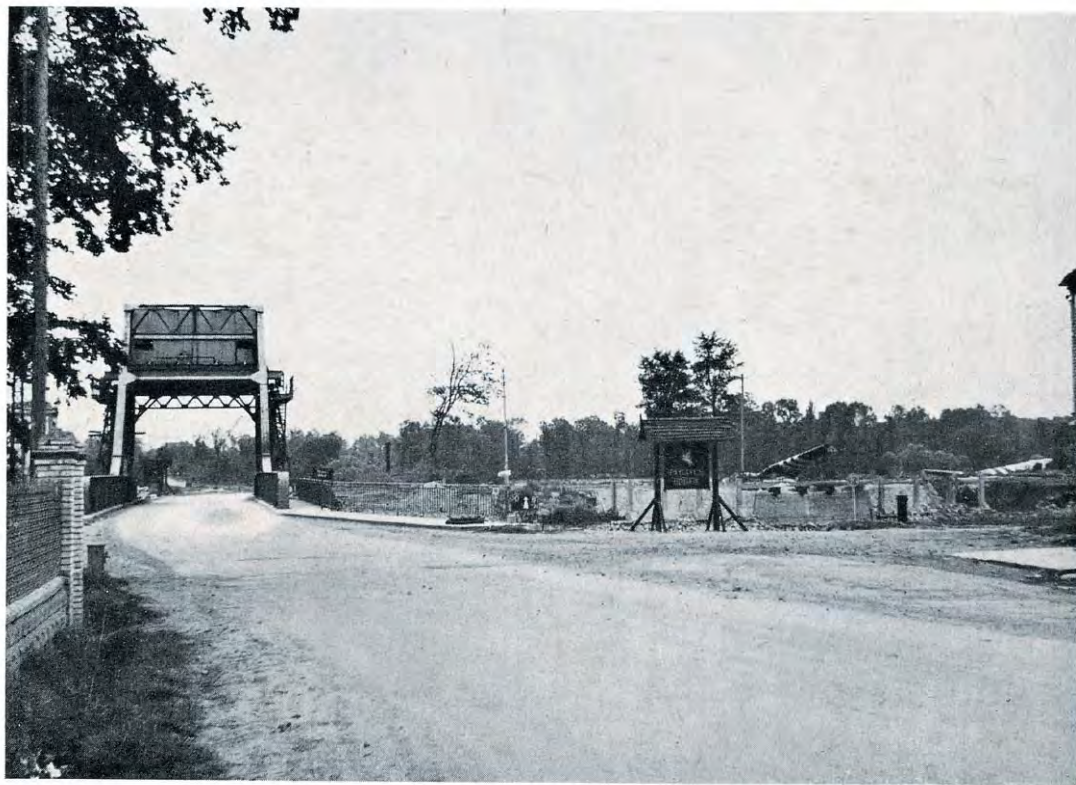


PLATE 7. The D.D. Tank



PLATE 8. The Assault, NORMANDY, 6th June, 1944. The 13th/18th Royal Hussars
launch their amphibious tanks

From the painting by Charles Cundall, R.A., in possession of the Officers' Mess



· PLATE 10. The 'PEGASUS' Bridge over the RIVER ORNE



PLATE 12. Men of the Regiment on the beach near LA BRECHE, June, 1944



PLATE 13. Destruction after FALAISE, August, 1944

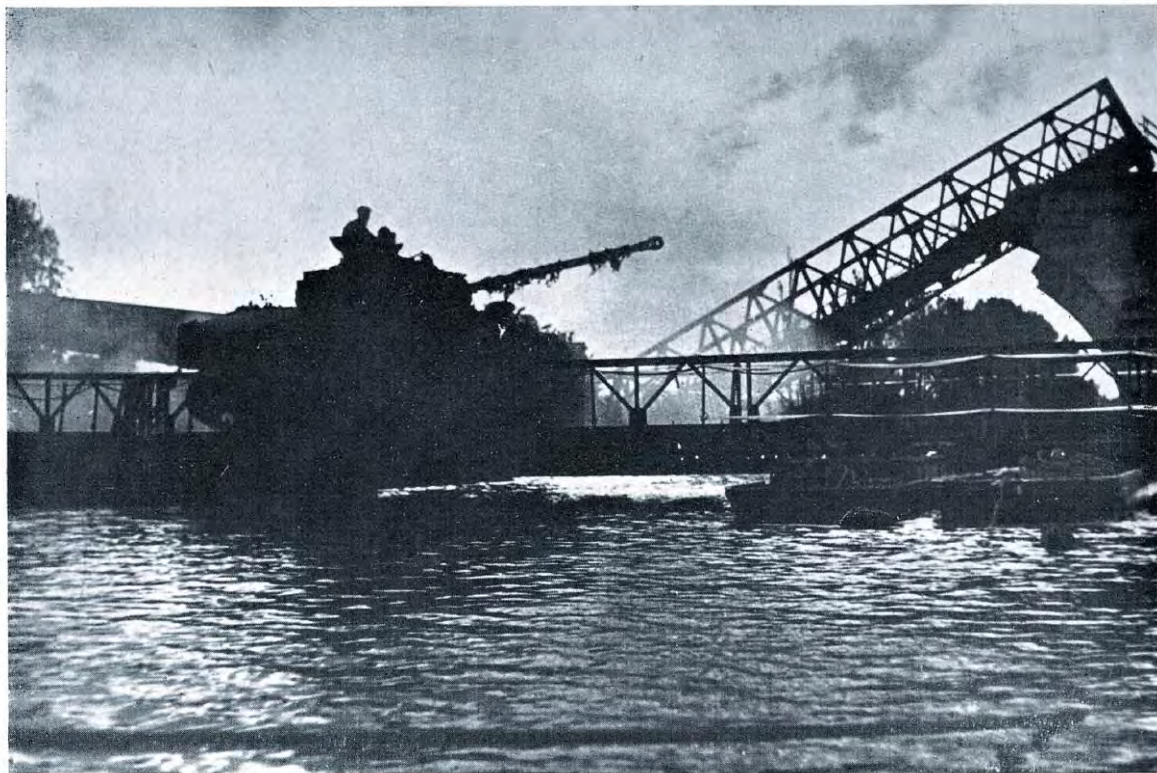


PLATE 14. Crossing the RIVER SEINE, 28th August, 1944

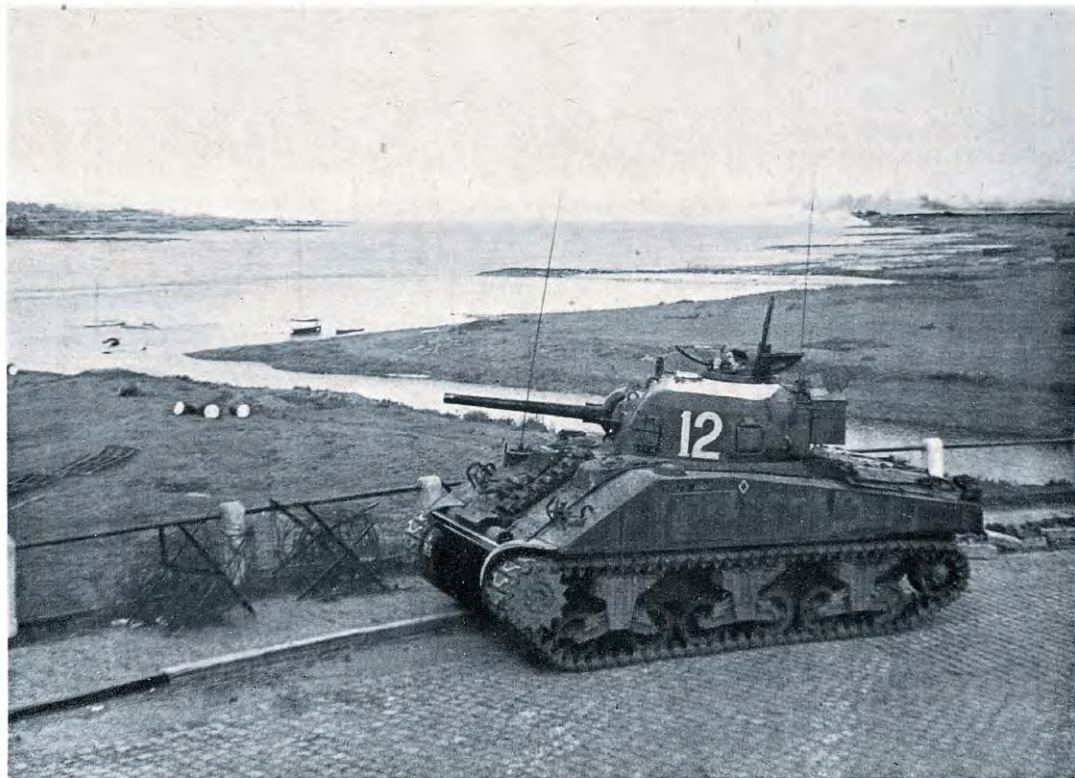


PLATE 15. A Sherman Tank of the Regiment by the RIVER WAAL (OR RHINE).
The 'Island', October, 1944



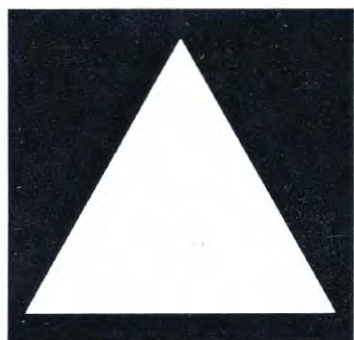
PLATE 16. 'A' Squadron in action during the Attack on
GEILENKIRCHEN, 18th November, 1944
By courtesy of 'The Times'



PLATE 17. General Sir BERNARD MONTGOMERY presenting the Military Medal to Serjeant R. HEPPER, 13th/18th Royal Hussars, 30th November, 1944
(later killed in action at GOCH)



PLATE 18. The 'Winter' Campaign on the German/Dutch border, January, 1945



1st DIVISION
1939-40



9 ARMoured DIVISION
1940-42



79 ARMoured DIVISION
1942-43



27 ARMoured BRIGADE
1943-44



8 ARMoured BRIGADE
1944-45



5 INFANTRY DIVISION
1945-

PLATE 19. Formation Signs worn by all ranks of the Regiment
1939-1947



PLATE 20. 'WE WILL REMEMBER THEM'

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: At the going down of the sun and in the morning
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. We will remember them.* LAURENCE BINYON

By courtesy of Mrs. Binyon and The Society of Authors